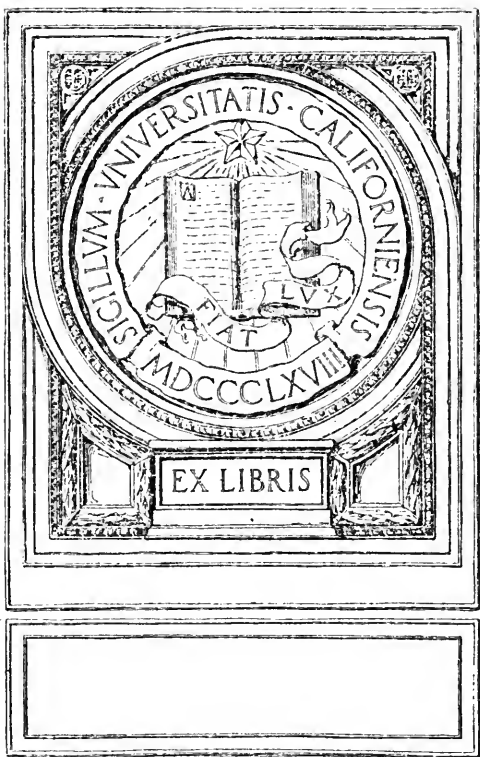


TOWARDS  
NEW HORIZONS

M. P. WILLCOCKS



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## **Towards New Horizons**

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WIDDICOMBE

A MAN OF GENIUS

WINGS OF DESIRE

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# Towards New Horizons

By

M. P. Willcocks



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THE  
NEW  
EDITION  
OF  
THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
THE  
CITY  
OF  
EDINBURGH  
BY  
JAMES  
WATSON  
ESQ.  
OF  
EDINBURGH  
1847

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TO ALL MY FRIENDS

SOME IN PRISON, SOME IN THE ARMY,  
AND SOME IN THE LABOUR MOVEMENT,  
WHO HAVE MADE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR ME  
TO DESPAIR OF THE FUTURE



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## Chapter I.—The Desire of the Nations

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ONE of the most painful features of the present time is the feeling of confusion in men's minds. In the midst of deadly international strife the very earth beneath the combatants seems to be shaking as though it were undermined for, although the British worker fights the German worker in the trenches, there is a feeling abroad that only a slight shifting of the wind of passion is needed to set German and British worker against German and British ruling class. It is at present no more than a premonition of possibilities, yet, when the Russian Cadet plays into the hands of the German Junker, and the Soviet Government calls on the German proletariat to make common cause against both, we know that a class war is already emerging where before only a race war had been apparent. We fight, both Allies and Central Powers, on sea and land, but also, and not as mere super-worms of the trenches, in the earth beneath.

We fight also in the clouds, for from an entirely different realm, neither political nor economic, there comes yet another challenge. In many ways it is the most disturbing of all, for there is

nothing public or private that can remain untouched by it. It deals with individuals as with nations, with the humblest as with the greatest : it is called in one phrase "self-determination," in another "the kingdom of God within." It condemns all discipline from without whether applied by a parent, a teacher, a judge, or a political system. It would give autonomy to the Pole, self-government to the Hindu and the Irishman, free discipline to the child, and the open road to the prisoner. It is, as some would put it, the law of "go as you please," or, as others declare, "as God made you" : it is the latest unfolding of the spiritual sense in man.

Thus we are at this moment confronted with the greatest racial war the world has ever known, with the promise of a world-wide economic upheaval, already prepared in the world of thought, and, as if these were not enough, with a new faith. The sword of separation is indeed amongst us.

Yet with it all there goes a strange underlying unity of feeling. Men are beginning to dream together : I am in your dream and you are in mine, whoever you or I may be. At this moment there is in us all a sense of change, of old things passing and new ones coming. It is an instinct like that which warns the birds of the coming of dawn even before the first beam of light has topped the horizon. Some birds

hate this reveillé and tuck their heads under their wings more tightly than ever they did in the darkness of night. Yet they all know: that is the point.

“After the war” is the talismanic phrase. After the war there will be a better world. This is believed by the people mainly because they feel that the swing of the pendulum is the ruling principle in affairs. Good times follow bad times in other matters than weather, and surely, since we have suffered so much, we have earned a little comfort? Blind instinct this, of course, and not justified by the only modern war of a similar character to this one. Another way of putting the idea is probably even more mistaken: it is the figure of the husbandman that is used here. Plough deep enough, they say, and you come upon rich earth below. So that when the ploughshare of present suffering has pierced the surface surely, here again, the coming generation will yield a harvest of greatness such as no other has produced? This is, they believe, the great ice-age that is preparing the wheat-fields of achievement for the centuries to come.

Whatever view we may take of these theories of suffering, one thing is certain: that even far-off races not directly in the grip of the war, such as the Asiatic Tartars, are showing the same perception of change. It is also becoming possible to see the forces already at play that must

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alter the world, whether they make its conditions better or worse. The fact that these forces are, at present, mainly active on the emotional plane makes them none the less important. For that plane is the power-house of action.

In the first place the war of empires, the vertical cleavage of humanity, in the midst of which we live is, in a sense, already an anachronism. The war simply marks the meeting-point of forces that were set in motion by passions which belong, not to the ages that are coming, but to the ages that are passing. It is not merely that commercial wars born of the dominating greed of warring nationalities must in time cease as dynastic and religious wars have done, but that a cross cleavage of the human struggle, horizontal, not vertical, is already preparing to break below the surface. Even now, in moments of passionate insight, the European worker can see, in this hour of racial division, the true unity of his class that knows no racial difference and acknowledges no frontiers either of sea or land. To the class-conscious worker the present division into nationalities is becoming artificial and race passion is being surely displaced by class passion. It was because the Bolsheviks flung out to the world the first challenge of the new order of conflict that they have been hailed as blasphemers in Allied countries no less than in enemy ones. These Russians have put a new War-god on the stage of history, a god that brings with it more



promise of destruction than any mere racial worship of Odin or of Thor. The dawn is blood-red indeed. Instead of political strife between races for the possession of markets and mines, for concessions and the power to exploit backward races, we are, it seems, to have economic war between the classes in a world-wide strike that will stretch at least across Europe.

Those who dread this promise of the future are confused by the cross-currents of the hour. They feel themselves tossed by eddies which obey no laws. Like men in the midst of an earthquake, they watch with dazed eyes the yawning chasms of the earth, the thundering fall of cities. The very hills themselves can give no sense of stability.

Yet earthquake time is, after all, the scientist's opportunity for studying the laws of earth tremors. It is a time for seismic apparatus, not for fears. We must keep our problems separate, must disentangle them from each other. For, just as a man is made up of body, mind, and spirit, so humanity itself has these three sides and has advanced on three lines: economically, by the road of wealth production; mentally, by political structures of greater and greater complexity; and spiritually, by casting off one form of faith after another or, more truly, by accentuating one phase of human brotherhood after the other. Half the confusion of our minds at the present moment comes from the fact that in one

and the same turning-point we are witnessing the break-up of the political order of the old world, the building-up of a new structure of economic development, and the birth of a new conception of the spirit of brotherhood, which is spirituality: three great changes, political, economic, and religious, all going on at the same moment. No wonder that there is confusion of mind, for in truth we are not accustomed to live consciously on three separate planes and to keep them clear from one another. Our habitual sensation is massive, our life, political, economic, and religious, is, to us, all woven on one loom. Mentally we are not spectroscopic, and consciousness comes to us naturally as white light.

For that reason we turn with a sense of relief to the common body of desire which lives far below all economic, political, or spiritual changes in the soul of the peoples as a result of the experience of this war. It is a desire for peace, for a good peace that shall not carry with it the seeds of future war in its terms. The first attitude of the people towards war, as towards all other phenomena from the outside, is one of fatalism. War, that takes the men away in wave after wave of robbery, comes like a storm that nothing can avert, like a change in the wind. They don't question, they submit. Then comes, with the death and mutilation of those snatched away, a gradual perception of the devilishness of the thing and especially of the

fact that those who provoke wars do not fight them. It is an easy step to the next stage: let those who make the wars die in them. There arises in the mind of the men themselves a sense of disgust at the horrible organisation which not only makes them suffer pain, hunger, fatigue, and filth, but which turns them into murderers. To those who stay at home and to those who go the fact is brought home at last that war is no longer the work of a shameless god but that the horrible thing which grips them is the creation of shameless men. The final stage is: "There never ought to be war." Thus the great dumb masses have learnt their first political lesson in common: they have learnt not only to suffer, but to think together.

Nor is this lesson really hindered by the fact that many there are who profit by the fact of war. These may rejoice, but even in their rejoicing the sense of shame is not quite forgotten. And no one forgets now that war is, profit or no, a thing that is caused very definitely by men's own acts—some men's—and that it ought not to be. War is no longer, in the mind of the mass people of Europe, an Act of God. It was so in 1914. The vast suffering of the time has put it, in the eyes of the multitude, by the side of pestilence and famine. It is something to be destroyed like other plagues. Other wars could, even in mid-career, occasionally be forgotten. But this one touches one class after

another, drawing women as well as men, middle-aged as well as young, into its net. Only the very old can still afford to enjoy it, only the very rich are still able to ignore the woe and ruin of it. The peoples of Europe are now moved by a common desire. It is the tragedy of the hour that the American people have still to learn what war means to the countries that are deep in it.

Nothing is more certain, however, than that this desire, passionate though it be now, cannot last beyond the generations which suffered the loss and bankruptcy of the event itself. The results, in poverty and barrenness, will still be working, years hence, but generations born in the midst of these results will not recognise them. They will accept the lowered standard of life as a natural one, and to generations yet unborn even the pitiful memories of this war will be like the memories of other wars—things to be recorded in history or to be decked with the romantic fancies of the fiction writer. Desire dies fruitlessly and emotion fades, leaving nothing behind it unless it can be seized at its height and used as a lever to move to thought and action. If the nations cannot be organised for peace when the world's desire for it is deep and strong, then not only will this war have been useless, but all the hopes of mankind are but delusions. The immediate task of the next few years, the organisation of the world for peace, can never

be performed when the nations have lost the insight into evil which this war has given them. With that insight the reconstruction of society as a league of free peoples is possible: without it, effort will be in vain. This thing must be done, if it is to be done at all, before a generation arises that knows not war. The theory of the work is already born in the brains of the thinkers, but only the will of the people can carry the conception into the realm of accomplished fact. The great question of the moment is whether this desire of the people will crystallise into a definite will to peace, and will be steadfast enough to overpower the ambition of those isolated autocrats who may, even in a democracy, be tossed to the surface flow of communal life. For, although the ruling class of to-morrow may be differently constituted from the ruling class of to-day, it will still be subject, of course, to the temptations of ambition. And one of the worst of these temptations is that of plunging the world into war unless, indeed, the structure of society is so changed that it cannot turn to war except by the utter disorganisation of the body politic. At present those who work for peace wade upstream against the current. The work of the years to come must be so to fix the constitution of the world that it will be the man who works for war who wades upstream and against the current.

We may take comfort for the task from the

strength of the people's desire, from its European scope. Through the darkness of the present time the longing for peace can be heard passing from nation to nation. It may be spoken under the breath, but spoken it is. And both those who base their hopes on victory and those who found them on negotiation desire the same result—among the people. From the Russian peasant to the organised worker of Berlin, Vienna, Lyons, or Manchester, from the Clyde to the Black Sea, from the Baltic to the Adriatic, the voice of longing rises. It is formulated in set terms by the intelligent, it is subscribed to by the wishes of the inarticulate, and Europe's centuries of war look towards China's centuries of peace with envy, with a sense that in the division of labour made between the active West and passive East it is not so certain after all that the West chose the better part.

All this is not cried upon the housetops yet, and that for reasons not entirely connected with the gag of silence imposed by governments. Many who most long for peace keep silence about it, and for much the same reasons that a girl keeps silence about the lover she desires. It is the quick of her inner life that is touched by this matter: it seems brazen to shout it at the street corner. By the mob, too, any confession of this sort is regarded as a weakness, or so she thinks. Thus, when governments go about hand on lip whispering "Hush," they are

helped by conventional timidity. But, after all, in the end, desire will out, because through desire live all the vital influences that keep the race going. Once "up against it," the girl goes to her lover, and the people to the peace they have longed for.

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## Chapter III.—War and the People

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**A**LTHOUGH, politically speaking, war is the result of the precarious equilibrium of a balance of power that can only be maintained by protective alliances and is liable to be upset at intervals by the growth of some states and the decrease of others, actual war would never break out unless the peoples, who are not privy to alliances and know nothing of the principle of the balance, could be brought to consent to it. The fact that they are ever induced to consent is due to certain superstitions that flourish in every country. And until these superstitions are traced to their sources, brought out into the open, and shown up for the deceivers they are, even a world organised for peace may find them dangerous. For they live in the dim background of half-perception, half-intuition, which colours the thought and act of every man, but which only unusual men actually formulate. Yet when formulated these superstitions become ideals and are accepted by the mass as objects of worship and reverence.

There are three of these war superstitions, corresponding roughly to the classes which have individually evolved them, though only roughly.



The first, which may be described as mediævalism, states that certain fundamental qualities in human nature can not only never be destroyed, but cannot even be transformed. War, they say, has always been the condition on which man has progressed, war, that is, by the destruction of enemies, by physical force. The thing that has been, shall be, says the mediævalist. It is rather an aristocratic doctrine and is felt to be vaguely connected with blue blood and the wars of the barons. But it conquers the people all the same, because of its simplicity.

The second may be called, for the sake of the alliteration, money-mongering. It is middle-class in its inception, and states, in opposition to Jean de Bloch and to all those who have studied the business of war, that commerce thrives on war and that, in short, the thing pays. And when he looks at the war bonus in his hand the worker, too, is convinced of the truth of this statement. It is only when the war is over that the factory hands and the shop-keepers discover the short-sightedness of this view.

The third, and the most delusive superstition of all, is mysticism. It comes from want of contact with primal simplicities and is born mainly in the brains of professional teachers of religion and philosophy, but falls into line also with certain instincts of sacrifice that are very primitive indeed. Accordingly, the mysticism which declares that war is ennobling, tonic, and

purifying, finds its victims everywhere in the West, where men are never happier than when they are in a bustle over a big job that is supposed to be going to carry the race onward and upwards to the mountain peaks. They, too, never suspect that the peaks may be situated in Cloud—Cuckoo land—until it is too late.

When the politician, the political juggler, tells the people that war is inevitable, that the small nations must be defended because the precious balance is overthrown, or that the world must be made safe for democracy, these three, the mediævalist, the money-monger, and the mystic, get to work. They are instantly as busy as disease germs, and with incredible speed the body politic is in a fever.

To take these in detail :—

The mediævalist is a person who, although European Society has altered its structure fundamentally at least three times during the historic period, remains convinced that what the constitution of the world now is, that it always will be. The only way to defeat him is to confront him with the accomplished fact. Then he yields at once, passing on instantly to the position that what the fact has accomplished will remain for ever. When the League of Free Peoples has removed the danger of international war the mediævalist will be unable to imagine the possibility of that League itself waxing old and passing, like the Roman Empire, like the feudal system,

into the thing which has been. The mediævalist has no memory at all: he is as oblivious of his past as any roué. Tiresome to the mounting spirit of course he must always be, but quite incapable of putting off the day of change for ever. As an anti-suffragist the female variety of the species will crowd into the polling booths under the Representation of the People Act, and loudly attack adult woman suffrage . . . until it has come. When a world-peace is organised the mediævalist will forget the thousand years of war in which, at the moment, he revels: he will be convinced, too, that the workers will only fight by means of strikes, until the shrapnel from the Marxian air-guns is actually dropping on his roof. The mediævalist is, as country people say, always where the cow's tail is, that is, behind. And it is a mistake to imagine, as children sometimes do, that all animals steer themselves by their tails.

Calling the money-monger a ghoul will not change his nature, and, although in the new society towards which Socialism looks, the man with the muck-rake will be forced to look upwards because his rake will be gone, the immediate business of the time is to teach the people that war does not pay. That it pays a small class is already evident, but that it leaves the vast bulk of the population immeasurably poorer it will be the business of the post-war years to prove. At present, so feeble is the power of

consecutive thought among the majority, it is really believed by millions that continuous orgies of destruction actually add to the world's available heap of commodities: that you can go on eating your cake and having it; that, because there will be activity in the building trade after the war, it was good economy to destroy Ypres.

Yet the only man, the big capitalist, who really does flourish on war, they are prepared to attack. And so, forged by the people's acquisitive instincts, comes the idea, conscription of war capital. This game of plucking the profiteer has all the truculent humour of your burly working man about it. But it will not become feasible till the world-desire for peace on the part of the people has crystallised into a world-will. And what the people may then do will not be, as now, a question of the people's power but of its sense of justice. The old law was that those who draw the sword shall perish by it: the new is that he who draws another's sword shall grow fat by it. And that, to any sense of justice at all, is intolerable.

By far the most dangerous member of the War Trinity is the mystic, for, since he boasts of being above reason, it is hard to prove him wrong-headed when he tells us that he is in tune with the great motive powers of human generosity. "I believe because it is incredible" he cries. "I believe that man, at his highest, rises above himself, rises above his own reason."

And in a sense it is true. Man never would have reached the point he has to-day had he always eliminated generous folly from his catalogue of qualities that are valuable, and "whosoever loseth his life shall save it" has been over and over again inscribed on the banners, not of saints only, but of scientists.

Professor Cramb quoted the death of Captain Scott and the mysterious loneliness of Oates' journey into the snowy wastes as supreme instances of the spirit that rises above reason, that yields to the magnificent daring of sacrifice, that seeks an aim only in the accomplishment of the deed for its own sake. Yet neither Scott nor Oates would have acknowledged that they went out merely to challenge the Antarctic cold; they went out, surely, to gather knowledge that could alone be gained by way of the cold. Had human science learnt how to outwit the Antarctic snows they would never have refused to use that knowledge. Indeed, man's greatness is shown in nothing so clearly as in the fact that he will risk all personal loss just to beat down under his feet the elements that defy him, the powers of nature that must be tamed and kept obedient. That soldier who, in Barbusse's *Under Fire*, says, "I don't believe in God because of the cold. If there was a God of goodness there wouldn't be any cold," has simply mistaken the nature of God and of man. If he had said, "I don't believe in man, because he has been fool

enough to let the cold get the better of him," he would have hit the mark more nearly. Cold is a thing that has sometimes to be endured for the sake of a greater gain, but only until man's mastery is so supreme that, wherever he meets it, he is the controller of it. We may, more wisely than Reade's hero who cried out that the devil was dead, indeed exclaim that the God in man is dead just now since he has given up his supreme work of fighting evil, because he is too intent on strife with his brother to have time for his own proper task. In war this carnival of unreason holds full sway; cold, hunger, pain, weariness, disease, and death, says the mystic, are beautiful in warfare, not devilish, as we used to believe; and before the men who submit to them Heaven opens. As gold is purified in the fire, so man is purified by going into the hell of his own creation, and, strangest article of all, by forcing others to go through it.

This is, of course, truly the abdication of human reason, especially since it ignores the plain fact that the soldier goes out, if he is a soldier at all, to dodge death and at the same time to inflict it on others. Of this the mystic is dimly aware, and, driven into a corner by argument, will always side-track his opponent by beginning to talk of great abstract ends, such as freedom and justice, that have never yet been obtained by physical force, but always by the exercise of reason, which begins when

the torture of the battlefield is a thing of the past. It is this mysticism that, debased and vulgarised as most subtle things are in war-time, gives us the sentimentality of haloed figures standing over battlefields or tales of ghostly battalions led by archangels. It leads to those prayers for victory on both sides which would be so bewildering to the Divine were He as muddle-witted as His children unfortunately are. Worst of all, it is this mysticism to which governments instinctively appeal when they want to raise a wind of war passions that shall blow whole nations across seas they know not and into harbours that are strange. And this impulse of a people is so intoxicating that it carries along with it, not only the cynics among the people, but the cynics in the government, so that, just at the moment when both people and government ought to be thinking at their clearest, they are carried away in a flood of passion. And even those who look coldly on at the process are fain to confess that it is a fine spectacle when a nation rises like an eagle to defend its land from violation, or another land from slavery. Is it not magnificent, we say, that a race should be willing to face hell for an ideal? And, once aroused, the wrath of a nation is like the wrath of a hive that will dash itself to destruction until the divine fire has burnt itself out.

Everyone has enough of the mystic in him to see the splendour of this attitude—on the people's

side. None the less, history treads closely now in the track of events, and it tells us quite clearly that never once, so far, has any nation been in possession of the facts behind the show of things. They have fought always for ends that they knew not, and for purposes which, had they understood them, they would have disavowed. The difficulty now in modern war is to discover, on the part of governments, the precise moment beyond which it is unsafe to continue war because the people are disillusioned. To stave off that moment every device of cajolment is resorted to.

Here the mystic asks a pertinent question. Suppose, he says, that what you aver is true: that no people ever goes to war save for motives other than the real ones, yet even so, if this great stirring-up of the passions is finished once and for all by the organisation of the world for peace, then will not the race fall into senile decay? Is it not good for a people or a tribe to rouse itself to united action, to fierce, urgent action, like a great bird calling into play every muscle and nerve for a fight against the wind? Does it not teach the individual the supreme lesson that he is but one cell in the organism of the nation? Does he not learn to realise the searching fire of brotherhood when brother stands by brother against the foe without the gates? A welding of wills to a common purpose is surely good now and again, even though that purpose be other than it seems.



The war mystic always disregards the inconvenient fact that war is hatred and that, notwithstanding the preachers, all hatred is bestial. It creeps insidiously on a nation till a river of lies flows between the rival sides, a river that has a trick of over-flowing its banks and carrying runnels of poison into all the sweet waters of common life.

The answer usually given to these queries of the mystic is that nature herself has provided another way for the stimulation of a common fervour. It has given cold, hunger, pain, fatigue, disease and premature death to be mastered on the physical plane; and on the spiritual, ignorance, the lust of tyranny and the fever of selfishness. There is no need, they say who use this argument, for war merely to keep us virile. The road of normal progress is uphill and it is so steep in places that we can never hope to scale the peaks before us without using the wings given by united action. Take the present moment, for instance. What is now wanted is united political action for the building of a world-federation, and that demands as passionate a devotion as any that has ever been shown in the carrying of a height, or the crossing of a river in face of sharpshooters.

This argument leaves the mystic unconvinced, and perhaps naturally so, since the answer to it is ready to hand in the facts of character. This work of joint and strenuous action will never

ennoble the common man : he can never reach the inspiration of its conception as an ideal, yet it is this same common man who, in war, has often saved a battalion by the sudden outpouring of a strength that, up to the moment of action, had remained unknown even to the possessor of it. Even to visualise for a second the vast fields of possible human betterment, either on the spiritual or any other plane calls, in fact, for a developed intelligence that has never been possible for the mass of mankind, and can perhaps never be possible for them to attain within any passing of time that is conceivable to the imagination. The Athenian never reached the passion of it, even when Athens was at her height of greatness ; to the subtle Egyptian this conception must have remained unknown. The one fronted the mind and its possibilities, the other the spirit and its powers, yet they each climbed up singly, man by man, and not in companies.

This is the mystic's very convincing reply to those who speak of the possibilities of passionate brotherhood supplied by the enthusiasm of humanity.

It is the labouring world alone that can give the true answer to this mystic claim that war is the great tonic of the spirit for the masses of men ; for the man who wrests a livelihood in the darkness of a mine, or among the power-driven engines, feels that his day's work supplies sufficient calls upon his courage and endurance to keep

him manly. He feels, too, in his consciousness of class unity a sense of brotherhood which, though less showy, is quite as real and even more generous than the camaraderie of a regiment. If he lives at grips with real life in times of peace, the prospect of exhilarating work and watching in the trenches will leave a sane man cold.

The attitude of mysticism, when it takes the form of generosity, may sweep the worker off his feet, but its fundamental claim that the unreason of war is the one cure for sluggish decadence is entirely powerless with the toiling masses. They know better. In this fact lies the hope that the world will ultimately rise entirely out of the worship of unreason which regards war, not as a scourge, but as the noblest exercise of man's activity.

This reverence for war is, indeed, no part of the inheritance of the Third Estate. It is a feature of the class-consciousness of the aristocrat, and from him it descended to the middle-class. For the tragedy of the rise of the bourgeoisie to power lay in their imitation of the aristocrat ideal. And imitation implies debasement. The middle-class traders were ashamed of their merchandise and so took little care to keep it honest. They set up instead a pinchbeck imitation of old ideals that had served their turn well enough—in old times.

Among these ideals the chief one was that of war as the school of manhood. But now that

Labour is rising to power the great question of the future is—will it keep its own ideals, or will it, like the middle-class, conform to standards that at present are foreign to its instincts? Will it, in fact, take over the ready-made ideals of militarism from the two classes above, or will it reject, when it comes into power, that cult of militarism which is in every way so foreign to its own traditions?

On the answer to that question depends the successful working of any possible League of Nations: without the spirit of Labour working in and through that League it cannot succeed, however well it may be constructed. For in the aristocratic view, as in the middle-class imitation of it, physical force is enthroned as the final arbiter, the ultimate test of greatness. But the worker's scale of values is different, strangely perhaps since, in the main, he lives actually by the exercise of force. Possibly, indeed, it is that very fact which has led him to see that there is no special mystic virtue in seeking danger for its own sake. The getting of daily bread means danger: the birth of new life means danger, and neither the man who couples engines nor the woman who brings a child into the world feels much need for the invention of unusual opportunities for rising out of the worship of ease and sloth. Nor will automatic coupling, or child-birth in "twilight sleep" actually avail to drive the bright face of

danger out of the work-a-day world. When all the world is work-a-day, and faces the chances of life in the open, the mystic's defence of war as the preserver of virility will be put entirely out of court. And even though knowledge may reduce physical risk and pain to a minimum, the very onward march of science itself, as it widens its scope in every direction, will call more and more for the nerve and endurance of common men. Theirs will be the task of testing, often by physical risk, the theories of constructive minds as these probe the darkness of the unknown forces of nature. And those who experiment with chemical and atomic powers, or with germs and toxins, will require at least as much physical courage as those who face a machine gun.

To touch reality at all points is to escape the prison of the mystic's claim for war as the one and only school of manhood.

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## Chapter III.—The Soul of a Class

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THE form taken by the reconstituted society will ultimately be settled by the character of the emerging class. For every old political form is a composite portrait on which each class as it advances to power writes a new impression, till the final form—if final it may be called where finality there is none—is a modification of every class rule that has gone before. This was the process when the barons controlled the autocracy of kings, when the feudal régime established itself, when the Radical middle-class laid the foundations of political freedom, and again when, at the close of the eighteenth century, the bourgeoisie entered into the fulness of power and capitalism sprang up to create the order of society that depends on wage production.

But what is now happening, in this region of class contest, is not precisely analogous to any of these previous transformations; for the coming of the manual worker into rule shows more of an international character than any of the earlier advances of class power. These other changes were national and sporadic, whereas the rise of the Third Estate threatens to overflow

the world like a tidal wave. To this effect, indeed, the war itself has contributed, for although it works by death-grips, as it were, it has yet given opportunities to the worker, such as he never gets in peace times, of learning how other nations live and how other races think.

If by no other means, guards learn of their prisoners and prisoners of their guards, and Austrian troops go over to the Russian armies, while even West Country troops learn what Ireland thinks of them. This war is the grand tour of the Labour element, a grand tour personally conducted by the national governments at an enormous cost. It is a process of internationalisation wholesale that no military discipline can prevent. Tommy learns, not only how the poilu behaves, but many of the ways of his enemy Fritz that are never mentioned on War Aims platforms. What was already in spirit international in the workers' movement has been made a thousand times more so by the war, as the period of demobilisation is bound to show. Accordingly, the first challenge to International Labour comes from the Russian peasant, it is echoed by the munition workers of Berlin and Vienna, and finds its response in the Councils of the Allied and Neutral Socialists. American Labour, at least officially, lags behind in this response, but that it, too, will learn the new language through the rough-and-tumble hazard of this time no one can doubt who has

seen what four years of war have done for the European worker. Whatever then the Third Estate may write on the face of civilisation will be one great expression of the people's will. And on this fact alone may one hope to build the League of Free Peoples. "Thou art the rock," says Destiny to the workers, "and on that rock will be built the brotherhood of the future."

So it seems. Yet at first sight nothing can be less uniform, less homogeneous, than the occupations, and therefore the characters, of the toiling masses who bear on their backs the elaborate structure of to-day's society. What can there be in common between the moujik of the Steppes and the East Coast fisherman with his steam-trawlers, or between the Lancashire cotton operative and the Egyptian fellaheen or the fiery rebel of Barcelona? There is at sight far more similarity among the middle-class, between stockbroker, parson, lawyer, tradesman and doctor. For these live in desirable family residences, enjoy city ideals of comfort and possess practically identical standards of what is good and desirable and of what is bad and to be avoided. They find their highest good in comfort, and their noblest expression of religion in a philanthropy which will increase the numbers of the comfortable classes. They live by interest and swing between the poles of thrift and luxury. Their diseases are the sophisticated ones that spring from repletion, from over-



stimulated nerves and the artificiality which acknowledges love's claim to joy but not to fertility. In the great test of their class, the way they handle the commodities by which men live and reproduce themselves, they have failed. Their proper business in the economic scheme was to feed, clothe, and house the community. Instead, they have, as a class, devoted their energy to the task of diverting the stream of produce into personal channels. The aristocratic work of defence, perhaps because it was a far easier one, has been more nobly performed.

The task demanded of the workers is a greater one than was asked of aristocrat or bourgeois. For on the way this class conducts itself depends whether the nations can be federated for co-operation, whether the revolution which will place the means of production in the hands of the workers themselves is to be accomplished by destruction or by intelligent good-will, and finally, whether the infinite varieties of individual and national life are to be left to develop freely, or whether existence is to be standardised into the pattern that shall please one predominant section of it. Political, economic, and spiritual reconstruction is the workers' job on the world stage.

What qualities are theirs by which they may hope to rise to so great an argument as this ?

The character of every creature is largely determined by the way in which it gets its living.

It is this fact which, beneath the shows of things, gives a common character to the masses of labour, whether factory-hands, fishermen, miners, or tillers of the soil. They each and all wrestle with matter to produce the means of life. As the worker's skin and clothes are earth-stained or metal-grimed so is the character of his mind stamped with the quality of the thing he works in. In this respect, in the handling and shaping of material, the whole of Labour acknowledges a common brotherhood. The manual worker is the quarryman from whose toil the city grows : he is not only on bed-rock, he actually moulds bed-rock by his strength and patience. This Third Estate does not, as other classes do, occasionally gain strength by touching Mother Earth, it is always in contact with her. Of the discipline of war, then, which brings humanity back to primitive wants, it has no need. The old Mother sees that the proletariat is kept disciplined. The members of this class have personal knowledge of the perils of steel and iron and massive weights, of storms, of the temper of steam-power, the electric fluid and of weary human muscle and nerve. They may fail in imagination or in subtlety, in knowledge of character, or in sense of beauty ; they can scarcely fall short in fellow-feeling for the troubles that are common to every man, or in the steadfastness of purpose which they have learnt from the ever-repeated processes of their toilsome days. Fellow-feeling,

which fights against the selfishness of the comfortable classes, and steadfastness in face of incessant opposition form no bad foundation for the next step in evolution.

Yet there are other qualities which the worker has inherited from the past. And in any estimate of the future one cannot afford to neglect the bitter sense of being left outside which forms the background of his perceptions.

Probably the most moving passage in modern literature is the description of the boy, Jude the Obscure, watching from a haystack the distant spires of Oxford. It stirs one profoundly like some scene of primitive life, because it suggests in picture form such worlds of regret and longing. There is hunger in it and desire, there is the pitiful sense of being shut out where others go freely in, there is aspiration and the determination to break down the doors that will not open of their own accord. There is, in a word, the spiritual tragedy of the labouring man.

To those who can read between the lines there is more than that: there is the sense of robbery. At least, if Jude scarcely felt this, the sympathetic reader feels it for him. For the beauty of creative thought, which is to the imaginative what Oxford stands for, is in its origin the work of the common folk. The first scratchings on the cave-walls, the rude carvings of primitive days, the early legends of fight or of awe in the face of earth and stars, were

just the gropings of the same men who provided the food of the tribe. Painting, sculpture, architecture and story-telling were born of him. And right into the Middle Ages these formed part of the birthright of labour. The studio school of a Verocchio or the workshop of a Cellini was not closed to a poor man's son who showed a talent for expressing beauty. Even for Piers Ploughman's poor friends Mother Church provided both picture and legend and the word spoken in stone; and in many a monastic scriptorium the Judes of other days could find means of expressing their humour or their sense of beauty. The scholar student had, it is true, to beg his way to the University gates, yet when he got there they were not closed to him. It was the work of the machine age to divert endowments of schools and colleges to the benefit of the rich.

Thus the mental tradition of the thoughtful workman is one of robbery. This was so long before political economy arose to show him that he only enjoyed the use of a fraction of the wealth produced by his labour. As he was being pushed from the land, so the gates of the mind were being closed upon him. The craftsman in metal and stone was driven out, as the student and artist had been long ago, by mere mechanical invention. Only now, however, is this age-long tradition finding expression in articulate words. Take three recent books, one

by a farm labourer, one by an ex-cotton operative, and a third by a hand in the railway works at Swindon: in all three, whether it is, as in James Bryce's *Story of a Ploughman*, dealing with Scottish farm life and its bestial possibilities, with the monotony of a typical Lancashire town, or with the clanging factory and its inhuman "speeding-up," the emphasis is not on squalor, but on ugliness, not on physical suffering but on the misery of boredom, on the dreary sense that the worker, sentient as he is, can look to no greater task than to be a cog in the machinery of modern life. He is a "hand": there is a terrible symbolism in the phrase.

This tradition of bitterness hitches on to an even older one. It is felt that wage labour is in some respects worse to bear than the condition of slave-labour which it displaced, and this because the contrasts are deeper. The numbers concerned, too, are incomparably greater, so few are the employing class and so large the employed. Nor, when the labouring man was a serf, had he ever anything so hideous to endure as the dreariness of a colliery village or a factory town. Greater suffering to individuals there probably was in the days of serf-labour, but there was nothing then to contribute the mental torture that comes to the worker from the sense of being caught in the loom of toil, of being unable to stop or slow down except at the risk of starvation. There was absent then the last

misery of being obliged to keep pace with absolutely tireless machinery. With a taste of education too, the sense of disinheritance has been accentuated a thousandfold. Factory laws, sanitation and model dwellings are entirely powerless to counteract the knowledge that the whole structure of society rests on labour and that, if this labour stopped for a week, the starvation of all would result. In England the railway strike has never been forgotten and never will be until the new economic order has swept away the old landmarks.

This sense of deprivation has its counterpart in the uneasy conscience of the leisured class. Both aristocrat and bourgeois have shown an ever-increasing sensitiveness in this matter. The perception of something withheld from the toiler came, in fact, to birth with the advent of the middle-class, expressed itself in the ideal of Social Reform in politics, and flowered in the modern Liberal Party as distinct from the aristocrat Whig power of the eighteenth century. Its latest expression is in the Whitley Report, for its watchword all through is compromise, and its theory of betterment that of the patch, from Labour in the Cabinet down to Labour on the Directors' bench. It expresses exactly what is generally meant in this country by democracy, which is alternately regarded as a leaning down and a stretching up, with a triumphant meeting in the middle on the prin-

ciple of stooping to conquer. From precedent to precedent, as they said in the Victorian days.

But now that the world has come to the point when most precedents are likely to be destroyed, this principle of compromise is about as useful as a rainbow bridge when you want to conduct a wagon across a chasm. Its followers during this war present the absurd spectacle of a man going about in an earthquake fire with corn-plaster for the healing of a few burnt feet. But the worker only too often feels, in regard to this business philanthropy, that the corn-plaster is used merely to distract the attention of the sufferer from the need to rebuild the city. He distrusts the intentions of the donor, even though these are well-meaning. He feels, rightly or wrongly, that it is a belated invitation on the part of the possessing class to share the swag. For where the traditions of the proletariat are of repression and toil, those of the leisured class are of an ever-growing world of ease. If the worker notes the motor-car more quickly than the Corot or the Rembrandt, yet of the Corot and the Rembrandt he has some inkling too. And if again he confuses these as objects of desire with ladies of pleasure and ballet-dancers, again he is only following those who taught him the respective values of these things.

Contrast is, of course, the essence of all this bitterness, the contrast that before the war was piling itself mountains high in every great city

of Europe. Worst of all probably in the worker's eyes is the standardisation of his manner of life, a standardisation which is forced upon him. The street he lives in, the school his children attend, the Chapel or public-house provided for his relaxation are all signed with the sign-manual of his particular kind of labour. A Russian ghetto may be unsavoury and often dangerous to its Jewish inhabitant, but he at least enjoys a variety in it that is soul-stimulating beside the dreariness of an artisan quarter in an English or German city. Some people live in dread of the Servile State of the future; the worker already lives in the Servile Street of the present. His position settles the very shape of the mug from which he drinks his beer in a tied house.

Yet the worker, like other men, has antipathies and preferences. He resents the still prevalent idea that if he had leisure he would use it like a hog; that if he were free to travel he would only sample foreign taverns; that if he were free to use his brains, freed, that is, from excessive toil, he would fail to add to the world's stock of achievement. Above all, does he resent the idea that the incessant prick of penury is the one spur that can keep him at work.

It is, however, this penury that gives to Labour its third most salient feature. Next to fellow-feeling and steadfastness we should reckon pluck as the characteristic which distinguishes the mass of the workers from the mass of the middle-



classes. For the working man, who lives with, at most, six months' club pay in case of illness between himself and destitution, has perforce to cultivate the tight-rope attitude of mind. Let him only look down and his brain will turn giddy: that is, of course, were he only in possession of the typical bourgeois brain which craves buttresses in the shape of investments and insurances. But, instead of reviewing his situation, the worker habitually lives with but one plank between him and poverty. He lives dangerously even in the safest industrial occupation. Accordingly among the proletariat, the typical virtue of the middle-class, thrift, is looked upon with a contempt that has, however, something of sneaking regard about it. Craving for security is easily caught in the upper artisan class simply from the infection of the lower middle class and, on the border-line where the two classes merge in one, both family limitation and ungenerous living spread downwards into the section of society to which these practices are, generally speaking, entirely foreign.

Putting the matter broadly, it may be said with truth that in many respects Labour is to-day in the position of the aristocratic class during the centuries when feudalism was being established. For at bottom all the qualities of the aristocrat arose from his sense of loyalty to his own order: he was class-conscious, as the bourgeoisie has never been. And class-conscious-

ness it is that lays the foundation of the finest qualities of the worker: sympathy with his order and with other orders when they meet on a common standpoint of need, steadfastness and generosity. Who can deny that these qualities, too, are markedly manifest in all aristocratic orders? It is this class-conscious virtue that has kept the worker faithful, in the main, to every demand for military "output" and that in face of an erratic ministry of munitions and a tyrannical Home Office, because he would not fail his order in face of the enemy guns.

And as the aristocrat when he founded feudalism worked on a system of organised land tenure, so the worker, when he comes to the task of construction, will base it on communal land tenure, not necessarily in the same form in every country but by the same principle. Just as in feudalism there was no private property in land, since the king's property was theoretically the fief of God, and the final working of the whole rested in the village commune, so in the workers' system, as indeed is already shown in the Russian peasants' arrangement, the one sole condition of land-holding will be service, will be production for the whole of society. And although in the more advanced western countries the communal village system will probably be merged in central schemes of land nationalisation, the workers' principle of construction will still be production for service, not profit.

The analogy between the worker and the aristocrat goes deeper still, for the underlying temper of the aristocrat, the soil which nourished his fellow-feeling, his generosity, and his idea of justice, was pride, just as his familiar temptation was tyranny. Even when in his religion he assumed humility, it was still with the feeling that Christianity, too, had its armorial bearings, its shield being a Cross, and its motto, I serve. So it is with the soul of the proletariat, his supreme virtue is endurance, and on that, as on a rock, will beat waves of resistance, of prejudice and of treasons innumerable, of treasons against the common rights of humanity. When one looks forward to the sea of future contest before one, it is comforting to remember the worker's build of mind and body. Both have been tested year in and year out by the stubborn resistance of material, by whirling machines, by wood and fire, by storm and rain. It is even pleasant to remember the quality of his pride, which rests on service. He not only feeds and clothes and shelters old and young, but he makes possible by his toil that beautiful world of the creative mind from which he has been shut out for so many centuries. His patent of nobility is indeed "I serve."

The temptation to tyranny, which he shares with the aristocratic order, will not be so perilous for him as it was with the pioneer constructive class. For behind the worker there has been

established that tradition of political freedom which it was the peculiar work of the middle class to create. Mainly, of course, even in that great fastness of the middle class, England, it is still riches and influence that actually defend freedom. As in the days of Pitt, so now in the great European war, it is possible only for the man of great riches to defy every repressive law from the Blasphemy Acts up to the Defence of the Realm Regulations. None the less the tradition of freedom still exists as something, not forgotten, to which all men may appeal as to a memory of better days. And for this we owe thanks to the bourgeoisie. The worker's business is before him in this matter: he will free his own order, for the growth of liberty is like the waves that circle outwards from a stone flung into a pond, and class after class establishes its own liberty. Apart from the mere counting of noses the strength of labour to-day comes from the fact that it is the one political party that has a scientific programme of reform. This fact is scarcely realised as yet because in each country the working masses are like the gigantic columns called the Stegosaurus. Each column possesses a small, intensely active brain, but the brain is not visible, and the mass is. This brain core of Labour is, of course, socialistic and in its spinal column, Marxian, and this not because Marxianism is violent, but because it is definite enough to be compressed into a sentence. It

may spell spoliation of a class, but it does supply a clear-cut system of universal applicability: it puts every man in his economic place and is as far-reaching as the theory of gravitation. It solves the economic problem with as triumphant a Q.E.D. as ever a mathematician could desire. It, in fact, reduces economic theory to an equation. All this apart from its truth or untruth, for even if it were proved untrue, it serves as a challenge.

From this spinal chord of socialistic thought spread, of course, infinite varieties of socialism till at last they merge in Fabianism, where social reform fights with reconstruction for the possession of the ground. The difference between Liberalism and Socialism is that between feeling and thinking. The Liberal feels, often bitterly, the unsatisfactory state of the present system. He believes that by tactful shoving he can improve it. But he has no theory, no science, and but little vision. Most honest Liberals are now disillusioned and confess it. They share the fondness of the easy-going man who has given the world up as a bad job for gardens and cloisters, for country houses and places shut away from the plague of present suffering. It is pleasant in these worlds apart, but Socialism will tear down all high garden walls. Vaguely the possessing class recognises this, and so it goes about with all sorts of panaceas, crying, "Let us be comfortable, or, at any rate, pretend we are."

In face of a catastrophe like a modern war these good people are helpless. Mountains high rises the heap of death, destruction, and ruin, but they cannot end it. They are bankrupt of ideas, and so they go on beating the tom-toms of international hatred at War-Aims meetings in order to give new life to a national wrath that, left to itself, would have died down with the speed of natural indignation.

The war is the measure of middle-class incompetence; it is the condemnation of capitalism, as the wars with revolutionary France were the condemnation of landlordism. Both landlordism and capitalism measure a nation's greatness by its square miles of territory and a man's by his bank balance. The principles of both are, "By what I have you are the poorer," and, "By what I have not you are the richer." These are the principles, not of the house of life, but of Bedlam. The inevitable result has come in a bonfire of ideals as well as of commodities, in which the wealth of an epoch of labour is being blown into smoke. It is the passing of an age that we are witnessing.

It leaves, however, one creation, that of the mass man. In his vast numbers he is the child of the machine. He has been called into being by steam and steel, and of this machine he intends to be the master. Abstract thinkers of other classes may create a science of *laissez-faire* political economy or discourse of the laws of matter; it

is an instrument maker who bridles the power of steam, and a spinner who multiplies the threads—and dies in poverty. As the mass man is born by machinery and lives by it, so in the character of his constructive thought there is the definiteness, the hardness, the purposefulness of a working machine. According to this theory, production will be the task of all except those excluded by natural infirmity, and the distribution of the entire result of production will be automatic in accordance with the principle of to each according to his need. The latter idea is already creeping into administration by means of rationing; so much for the heavy worker, for the schoolboy, for the nursing mother and the babe. That is it; to each according to his need.

It is a mathematical formula that says, since Value is created entirely by Labour and since the labour of all is here involved, then the produce must be at the disposal of all. The means of life are thus insured to each, but something even greater is accomplished, for by this means every individual is once and for all released from the incessant absorption in personal gain which keeps humanity crawling along on levels little raised above those of the beasts. For the first time man will touch the confines of real freedom. And this is the opening of the kingdom of the spirit to the upward-climbing animal that he has shown himself to be.

That is the theory: it will take centuries to

work out, but the mere framing of it sounds the death-knell of the capitalist system. The question of time depends simply on the speed with which the Stegosaur can become permeated with the mental contents of its constructive brain. And before one attempts to answer that one must remember that ideas spread with great rapidity in a century which follows the period that made easy inter-communication one of the chief objects of its activity. Also, where many races are concerned, the fire of one acts as a torch to the slow combustion of another as, in the long run, the weariness in well-doing which dogs the footsteps of the fiery depends for persistent effort on the patience of the slow. Thus, when once the English people realise the speed with which the Russian peasant solved the land problem, they will, for very shame's sake, no longer be content to endure a condition of land tenure which has been the root and origin of the people's degradation for three hundred years. This has been hidden from them largely by the fact that while we were exploiting the tropics for war material, we were neglecting the soil at our doors. But with the passing of plenty we are getting down to the bones of the thing.

To sum up: the character of the builder of the new world is of supreme importance, for he may build by spoliation and fight by the principle of the dog-fight, simply to decide who is top-dog, or he may use those qualities of



generosity, of pride, and fellow-feeling in which he is so richly endowed for the benefit of all. And in the main, for this good building in preference to bad, we must rely on the worker's simplicity of outlook. He is in the procession of life and not afraid to acknowledge it. He solves his personal problems in the light of this sense of life. The chances are that he will solve communal questions in the same way. Thus, love and parentage, the need of the woman for the man and the man for the woman, and both for the touch of hope that a child gives, are faced, not evaded, by the workers. The result is that the working man is cleaner and the working woman freer from conventions than men and women are in any other class. "Accidents" in the form of illegitimate children are not left to starve in baby farms except in grades, like that of the domestic servants, which have been contaminated by the cruel propriety of the middle classes. Mistaken marriages may occur, of course, but the labourer faced by an insane divorce law has no alternative but to ignore the law altogether and make free alliances. He recognises, of course, that this law is merely the creation of an artificial class which has lost its grip on reality. Thus he avoids on the one hand the evil of prostitution and on the other the waste of purposeless spinsterhood. In sex questions the rule of a class that is not too fine for nature will work a revolution more beneficent

and vital than in any other except in the matter of war.

In war, as in love, it is the touch of reality that we need, a simplicity of outlook and purpose unvitiated by the crude rhetoric of the ruling classes to-day who raise mere possession, both in empire and in social life, to the godlike level of some immortal quality of the soul. What the worker sees in love is joy and fruitfulness. What the worker sees in the opposing armies are—just men like himself, men who have needs, loves, desires like himself, who like him are oppressed by the rulers of the earth and led by them into the human slaughterhouse for the periodic “purification” of war. The “Kamerad” cry that is the jest of the gutter press and the cinema may in time become the slogan of a world that reverts once more to truly human aims. For from one worker to another, even though these be massed against one another for murder, it will be a quick step to the next thought: I will free him. He will want to free me, for he understands. He will answer me. And together we will break the chain of robbery and oppression that binds the whole earth.

To that pass, it seems, the common man is coming. It is this simple view that may help the workers to resist the cloudy fallacies of the imperialism which is turning one fertile region after another into a charnel-house. It was not the worker who conceived that the greatness of

a nation depends on huge territories, on tropic wealth pouring in, and manufactured wealth pouring out. He is not greatly concerned, except when filled with the poison of middle-class ideas of possession, with that question of "greatness" about which so much to-do is made to-day. This imperialism of the ruling class has, when reduced to plain terms, no higher ideal than that of a bargain sale. But it is of the very essence of middle-class ethics, and to it is dedicated the craft of the diplomat and the finesse of the Chancelleries.

"Cards on the table," then, is already the *mot d'ordre* of the emerging class. It is the way in which a man of simplicity naturally prefers to do business. Hence that strange unprecedented event in history, the publication of the Secret Treaties.

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## Chapter IV.—Change

### Phase I.—World Federation or Imperialism

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**I**T is a law in biology that life evolves by incessant competition and the consequent destruction of weaker forms in favour of stronger ones. Sociology tells the same story: that weaker races vanish or become merged in those that are more prolific and masterful, and that the upward path of communities is one of everlasting defeat and victory. The aborigine of Australia, the redskin of America, dwindles before the European, even the strong Maori is modified by the arrival of the vigorous stock from England. The negro, incapable as he is of defeat in fertility, yet is always found in a condition of tutelage wherever he meets a handful of the white stock. The contest in the human region is not only one of fecundity but of organising and commanding mentality. In this contest the subtle Hindu is mastered by the crude Englishman whose ideal is order, whose genius is for the organisation of physical life. Such is the law among animals, among men, among nationalities: in all expressions of physical life the battle is to the strong and the race to the swift.

We are told that this circle of contest and of evolving life can never be broken, more especially when we consider that, in the higher reaches of existence, the outer contest is but conditioned by the inner struggle of ideals of which, in fact, it is the expression. In the world of ideals there is struggle between opposing conceptions, a wavering to and fro, the long subsistence of half-outgrown forms of thought and the final victory of a new synthesis that may exist and rule for generations, but must ultimately succumb to a yet wider one. The question before the world at the present time is this: Is a political synthesis discoverable that will, by covering all the present structures of national life which still exist, put an end to the interracial strife that so far has been the law of all existence? Only so will it be possible to break the age-long chain of perpetually repeated contest.

Great as is the task the mere fact that there is a three-fold change preparing on the world-stage is some guarantee that it is being prepared for by the forces which guide evolution. Not only is the idea of the League of Nations arising in innumerable minds, but the economic change which will bring Labour forward as a new element in world-politics is already here. Moreover, in the department of life which is usually called spiritual a new spirit is observable by those who are able to read the signs of the time. In short, we have coming, simultaneously with the suggestion

of a new political grouping, the rise to power of a new class and the birth of a new spirit of liberty in the hearts of the people. And without a new spirit of brotherhood, and a new class through which that spirit may act there is little hope in any mere political grouping, however carefully this may be organised. Nor without new men and new ideals is it even possible to conceive of a world-wide organisation in place of the groupings which have so ravaged the human family.

The widest conception of a political group yet reached by the bulk of mankind is that of Imperialism. This ideal has every characteristic of strength. It is wide and generous in wide and generous minds when compared with earlier political ideals. It is protean in spirit, adapting itself easily to the various types of mind to be found in every nation, and hence can be made, by the crude and vulgar man, even more vulgar and more base than the national and tribal ideals out of which it was evolved. It is derived, of course, from the family group, the source of all political forms. In idea it is the notion of "I and mine—against the world," first that we may form a compact mass to resist attack from outside and then—and this is the essential greatness, the essential hypocrisy, of Imperialism—that we may enforce on others, who are less wise than ourselves, the way of living which, because it is ours, seems to us the only one that should be tolerated on the globe.

Looked at thus Imperialism is much more than a mere acquisition of territory for the purpose of commercial gain. To the generous-minded man it means a sharing of mental truth with others less happily gifted. It comes to many in the guise of a religion. It requires missionaries to express its beauty as well as the strong arm of the law to enforce its acceptance on stubborn and blind-eyed races. Imperialism, then, calls for martyrs, preachers, and zealots, as well as for flags and machine-guns. It supplies some with spiritual enthusiasm and offers an opportunity for orgies of brutality. It will never be displaced until a greater conception is ready to take its place. It is, so far, the largest political grouping as well as the nearest approach towards brotherhood that the majority of the human race has yet reached. And, in the main, it is honest as far as it goes. It says, "I and mine have reached a certain altitude. We see things in a certain way. In it we satisfy all our needs and find joyful exercise for all our highest faculties. Come with us then and you shall share in these blessings. We have a whole conception of existence much higher than any you can frame. We prove this by the only possible means of proof, that we are great and powerful, we number millions and we forge ahead. Come in with us—peaceably, if possible. But if you won't, we'll make you. We have standardised existence for forty millions, or a

hundred millions, we will standardise the whole world in time." It is, this spirit of Imperialism, both megalomania and generosity. It is a mirror of the mind of man that conceived it. It is an outcome of the spirit of expansion which, in ever-widening circles of political forms, has led us all the way from the isolation of the cave-man to the socialised existence of to-day.

But it means war. It is the most war-like conception that has ever appeared. It leads to war when it is a mere absent-minded process of entering into possession of annexed territories that make little or no resistance. It leads to war even more surely when it enters the world fully equipped as a combative ideal throwing down a challenge in words to arouse the competitive instinct in other nations. For ideals are infectious now, with the present means of inter-communication, and a solitary empire like that of Rome is inconceivable to-day. With Germany Imperialism came out as a theory. It was not with her, as it had been with Rome and England, a mere process of subjugation that sprang from a native capacity for acquisition, for burglary, robbery, and borrowing of every kind. Wherever he went the Roman or Englishman added to his possessions, not because he considered it to be his destiny, but because, like a kleptomaniac, he could not help doing it. Besides, both the Roman and the Englishman did honestly prefer an orderly to a slipshod way of doing things.



And if frail and beautiful things get trampled under foot in the process of establishing order, well, anyway, this world isn't the place for things frail and beautiful. Get rid of the weeds, that's the main point. So far the Roman, the English, mind.

With the same instinct in him, the German, of clearer Teutonic mentality, was dammed back by circumstance from all creation of an Empire on which the sun never sets. And so, shut off from active conquest, he dwelt in fancy, like an old maid on imaginary love-episodes, on Imperialism as a theory. He went on for forty years shaping a form in the world of thought against the time, that German "day" of which we have heard so much, when he could proceed to shape his form in actual material. Challenged in this way by a mental concept, the Englishman finds a rough approximation to an ideal of Imperialism, a sort of reach-me-down suit, and jumps to the defence of it against the challenger. To both Germany and Britain it is now a question of whether the bulk of the world shall be standardised according to the German or the British idea of things. During the main struggle the ambitions of other races raise their heads, and the French and Italian Governments make their bargains with the Allies for a foothold, the one in the Rhine district and the other on the coast of the Adriatic, looking forward on their own account to a new balance of empires when the mines of Alsace-Lorraine and the maritime power

that has for its base the coast-line of Dalmatia, may well form the foundation for another world struggle. Thus from strength to strength war grows and the "final" settlement of to-day contains the certain promise of new chaos in the future.

The guiding principle of the imperialist ideal is, however, one that is difficult to contest—in the form in which it is usually put. It is intolerable, say the imperialists, that the weak should govern the strong. That is the one intolerable thing. But, since during long periods of peace strong and weak often change places, occasional wars are necessary to prove by actual contest which has become weakened and which remains, or has grown, strong. But strong and weak in this connection merely mean, not strong or weak in national quality of mind and character, but stronger or weaker in physical force. For in the war of machine-guns and ships there is no actual testing of national character at all, except that the one which comes out victorious simply proves that he has put into the struggle all that he could of physical force. The ideal of Albania, for instance, may be very noble indeed, many believe it to be one of the finest conceivable, but it can never prove its superiority by war. In the same way the genius of Russia, so far always overshadowed by the more efficient German mentality, is at present the great psychological problem of the world at the present

moment. Yet by the present system of competition between the nations there is no possibility of testing its quality. When, then, we talk of strong or weak, we mean strong or weak as tested on the physical plane, and on no other. But a mighty nation of subtle mentality, of noble spiritual ideals, may be both unwilling and unable to divert its power into drilling armies and constructing superior engines of destruction. Under present conditions that nation must go under. And that this is undoubtedly true is, in the long run, the real reason for the condemnation of Imperialism and the wars of domination to which it inevitably leads. Justly, therefore, does the one race which has formulated the theory of Imperialism set up as its creed the religion of Valour and as its guide the god of Battles. For the imperialist nation there can be no other god, no different creed. The Englishman, by his muddle-headedness, or, as others put it, his hypocrisy, has seldom had the honesty or the mental alertness to confess a similar creed, though by his acts he acknowledges it as also his. To the German belongs the credit of making his theory square with his practice. And by this straightforwardness he has provoked the lurking honesty of other races to come out into the open. On the whole, it is a gaol delivery, ugly but wholesome.

[ It, at any rate, shows us where we are. For when the Allied Powers declare that by force

they will drive out force : that they will conquer militarism by superior militarism, they are offering no test whatever of the superior quality of their own inherent qualities over those of the Central Powers. Ordeal by battle never proved which man was the better. Granted that one side may ultimately be shown to possess more physical force than the other, the question still remains undecided as to whether it is better for the world that it should be given an Allied form of mind or a Central Power one. And no rhetorical shouting of grandiloquent creeds on either side can affect the issue one iota.

Worst of all, a military decision between the warring empires will leave the ultimate question as to whether Imperialism can ever be displaced by a yet wider grouping quite unsettled. Yet man, as a whole, is now on the verge of becoming world-conscious. His reasoning faculty covers a wider area than in the early days of his history when, by working up through tribal and national forms to imperial ones, he lived in ever-widening circles of sympathy. These circles grew out of him and round him instinctively, without any recognition of purpose on his own part, other than that of mere convenience. As from the consciousness of the animal he evolved the self-consciousness of the human being, so now he is passing through the next great gateway of birth—into a world-consciousness, a sense of kinship with and responsibility for all men. He is at

last, by reason, becoming a conscious agent of that evolutionary process which has so long used him as a mere tool. Now, he begins to ask himself with purposefulness, what is there beyond Imperialism? What is there that will bind these warring races together? By what means can we know what is really strong in individuals and nations? What is there that truly tests the right to lead?

To these questions an answer must be found. For it has indeed come to this point with the world that it must "learn or perish." Civilisations have refused, in the past, to learn and have perished, yet the world went on, it will be said. But that is impossible to-day since the whole globe is now affected by a solution of the present difficulty: neither Arab nor negro, neither Yellowman nor Red will be left safe in this crisis if the white races fail to find the way out. It is world-ruin or world-saving that confronts the governments to-day.

And world-ruin means that the practical end of the race may come, with the dreaming East drawn into the orgy of destruction, in a great ultimate contest of weak and strong, a battle-grip which will mean the destruction of all. This would not come immediately, of course, for it is conceivable that Empire after Empire might rise out of war and each one in its physical decadence and senility might fall before a stronger race. The end would come at last by a destruc-

tion, total and complete, of the warring races by means of the amazing mastery they would have gained of destructive implements. Man would be then destroyed by the machine he had created. Matter would have overcome in the long conflict between body and soul, between the dead resistance of material and the power of the life which flows through it.

The alternative now is the organisation of a world federation by means of which universal disarmament shall be ultimately agreed upon, after an interregnum of power wielded by an international Court of Arbitration. The force used to compel obedience would be two-fold; first, by cutting off the recalcitrant nation that refused to obey the judgment of the others from the exercise of trade, and, if that failed, by naval and military measures. It is believed, and justly, that the economic weapon would be sufficient and that, after a century or so, the international army and navy never having been needed would cease to exist. The analogy always drawn between this structure and that of national law is, in this sense, a very imperfect one, since it has never been possible to bring economic pressure to bear on the individual wrongdoer. If, in other words, it were possible to punish a man by the menace of starvation, both gaols and policemen would be superfluous. In this respect a world-organisation is in a superior position to a national one since it has

an effective weapon at hand which would work smoothly, effectively, and with certain results.

This device of the reason appeals to most reasonable individuals, especially in the prevalent mood of war-weariness. It has, however, the demerit of possessing nothing whatever wherewith to satisfy the emotional sentiments to which imperialism and patriotism appeal. It is the man in the library speaking gently, in studious and reasoned terms, to a blazing zealot who is shouting appeals to all the passions in turn from the most exalted to the most base ; it is, speaking gently, in fact, to Mr Hughes and Mr Havelock Wilson. A world merely organised for peace might exist during the reaction time after war, but could probably be easily overthrown by an outburst of the dark forces which live hidden in the self-assertive and revengeful instincts, and rise to full power when these are reinforced by the mysticism of religious hysteria.

World-federation, if it is to remain a purely administrative reorganisation in the political sphere, will almost certainly fail. It will no doubt be worked out completely on paper, will come into existence in the time of after-war reaction, but will be swept away, a century or so hence, by another uprising of the racial passions carefully fomented by interested persons. This could happen even if disarmament had been accomplished. For the military caste, though temporarily unemployed, would still exist

potentially, and would, as now, play into the hands of the sections of society who profit by war. The last touch would be given by religion and the pulpits would begin, once again, to echo to the cries of international hatred under the guise of superior piety.

It is usual at this point to refer to the various Councils which have already assumed control of a large number of practical matters that concern the interests of all nations. Among the most important of these are: The organisation of the International Red Cross Society at Geneva in 1864; the first International Postal Congress at Berne in 1874; the meeting of the Metrical Diplomatic Congress at Paris in 1875: this provided that a general conference on weights and measures should meet in Paris at least once in every six years, and formed a precedent for the assembly of a regular international congress; the calling of an International Telegraphic Conference at Petrograd in 1875; the first International Monetary Conference at Paris, on the invitation of the United States, in 1878; the International Conference at Berlin, which created the Congo Free State in 1884; a prime meridian agreed upon for all the world at Washington in 1885, in the interests of commerce and science; the Marine Conference at Washington established the usages of the sea for all nations in 1889; the first pan-American Conference met at Washington to consider the interests of all the nations of



the two Americas in 1889; the Anti-Slavery Conference assembled at Brussels to bring united pressure against the horrors of the African slave trade in 1890; the International Sanitary Conference met at Venice in 1892; in 1893 the second International Sanitary Conference at Dresden; and in 1896 the second Universal Postal Congress at Washington; the Peace Conference at The Hague in 1899; the Congress at Brussels providing for the abolition of national bounties in sugar assembled in 1901; and also in 1901, at Mexico, the second Pan-American Conference met and was attended by nearly every nation of North and South America.

All these are practical in aim, and, with the exception of the Hague Peace Conference, they all deal with matters beyond the sphere of national sentiment and patriotic enthusiasm. In short, they show that severely business questions of import to the whole world can be handled successfully by all the nations together in Congress. Beyond this they prove by experiment nothing, except that by the dawn of the twentieth century the world was getting into a habit of transacting some of its business with an eye to the advantage of the whole comity of nations. And that is an enormous advance in the history of international relations.

None the less, it still remains true that the World-Federation of the future, if it is to succeed in establishing a permanent peace, must be

carried out by men who feel themselves one in passion and emotion, and, above all, by men who know beyond all doubt that the purposes of the world are best served by development from within, not by discipline from without, both for men and nations. That is to say, the world will need first to be lifted out of the rut of racial conflict into another, a serener, clime, and the men who guide its destinies will have to value self-determination, or spiritual control, according to the inner law of a man's, a nation's, life as the supreme arbiter in everything.

Is there any sign that these radical, these colossal changes are coming to pass?

Economically, it is certainly true. For it is felt everywhere that we are, in Europe, on the verge of a new social and economic grouping which will not be the affair of one nation only, but will run throughout the Western World; that by this means not only will equality of wealth be achieved but from it will emerge, as the chief governing factor, a proletarian class who will start the exercise of their power as one international body, acknowledging racial habits as differences but not as challenges to war. Production will be socialised internationally and this socialisation will work side by side with political federation. Racial and imperial ambitions will no longer be able to flog the mass of the people into internecine strife, because in a proletariat who have made common cause

against their common enemy in every country, all national ambitions will be dead. This war against "the common enemy" may be by strikes, by force, or by the rational way of legislative enactment. However it be accomplished, it will set the entire civilised globe on a new footing. And with the means of production in the hands of the entire people a political League of Nations will inevitably follow as the most natural step possible. To such a society as this the very concept of empire will be utterly foreign. There can be then no contest as to whether a German type of thought shall rule the earth, or a British, for across the whole world will be written the word human, human in multitudinous differences of internal character and external habit, but one in need and one in sympathy. "I will make them all Hellenes"; so Alexander is said to have exclaimed to Aristotle, when he was discussing the future of the barbarians. It was a splendid ambition, for to be a true Hellene was the highest degree of excellence obtainable by Greek or barbarian. There were then but two typical recognised forms of life, the Greek and the barbarian; there are now an infinite number, and every single one of them, even the lowest and most degraded, is, in the thought of to-day, a note in the universal harmony of the entire race.

For this world-construction issues, as all great things must, in the spiritual; in that which is

neither from the body, or the economic side of life, nor from the mind, which is political. Neither the mind nor the emotions, pure and simple, can build up the world-structure of the future. A third element is needed, and that is a new spirit with a new watchword. It has already, like the Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity of the French Revolution, its battle-cry. And this is self-determination. It sees in all the world's history from the beginning till now a false method, that of force, of instituting order. It sees in Imperialism the last word, the *reductio ad absurdum*, of this method of keeping order. It knows that, if force is ultimately to go from international politics, we must also cease to rely on it in education and in the administration of justice. For a peace that is kept by force is only a preparation for war, whether we have a League of Nations or a series of warring Empires.

This principle of self-determination sees in all races, as in every human being, in all polities and in all modes of thoughts so many channels by which the inner life makes itself felt. Sometimes from these channels there seem to emerge evil things, uncontrolled passions or savage lusts. But still, in some way ungrasped by our mere intelligence and only to be reached by instinctive faith, the new spirit believes that all such passions can be cured by a confident appeal to the heart of life in each man, be he savage or civilised. For that heart seems, and experience

teaches it, always to respond to an appeal of trust and affection. Only we must learn how to appeal. And in that knowledge we are very far behind, because we have never relied on it, but always on force. In this view all racial qualities are worth preserving, from the humour and lush exuberance of the negro to the asceticism of the Hindu, from the curious vagueness of the Russian mind to the squinting humour, as it seems to England, of the Irish, or the combined materialism and mastery of abstract thought in the Jew. To one race goes the mastery of matter and to another the easy comprehension of the things of the mind. But with what infinite loss to the richness of the whole would either one or the other be stamped out—by any efficiency either German or British, Teutonic or Gallic. To this spirit the clash of Empires seems but the struggle of so many barbarians. But to such a spirit the organisation of a League of Nations might be safely entrusted. And it is only by the help of it that there is any guarantee for the success of a Federation of the World.

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## Chapter V.—Change

### Phase II.—The New Economic Order

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**A**LTHOUGH imperceptible change is always going on, we most of us find it hard to believe in it. The consequence of this weakness is that many people are never more certain of the stability of the social order than when it is on the verge of metamorphosis. This is particularly true in the region of economics, where people not only resist change with their conscious mind but also dread it with their sub-conscious feelings. They tell themselves eagerly that what is must endure: it cannot possibly be that they have had the misfortune to be born into a period when things are going to be uncomfortable. Yet in fact there is no department of existence which has undergone greater changes than that of the production and distribution of wealth. The holding of land and the cultivation of it has been communal, feudal, and personal: the control of industry has been communal, under guilds and under private owners; the method of labour has been by village communes, by tribes, by serf labour, by slave labour, by free craftsmen,

and by wage-earners. Change after change, indeed, we see as we look back over the centuries.

One of the most effective developments of the Labour Movement in this country at the present day consists in the work which their lecturers and writers are doing in the production of studies of past economic conditions. The method of these studies is always that of the bird's eye view used as the text to support a theory. And one wonders, as one follows the often close argument, why this thing has not been undertaken by the official teachers of political economy. Is it, one asks oneself, that they really are, as Labour asserts, biassed by their dependence on the possessing classes, or are they simply timid thinkers, weak in the constructive faculty?

However this may be, what is certainly going on under the surface is a great massing of opinion as to the economic settlement, a massing on both sides, among the employers as well as the wage-earners. On the part of the employers and of all those whose interests depend on the preservation of stability, on the present order of wealth production and distribution, the process in England takes the form of a general tendency so to soften the lot of the wage-earning classes that they may have no occasion for discontent or restlessness. The war itself has given a keen edge to this anxiety, since no modern war could be carried on for a single day if Labour refused its support. In a thousand ways is this tendency

shown, by Whitley Reports, by Insurance Acts, by the bait of promised Mothers' Pensions, by "welfare workers" and an infinite number of schemes for banishing abject poverty and producing an inordinate amount of paternal supervision by inspectors who will act as censors of morals and opinions as well as relieving officers. Most significant of all is the temper displayed by those who organise these national palliatives. Except in the case of military authorities this temper is above all else conciliatory. Even to a furious Trade Unionist it turns the other cheek. And, if Christ was, as is commonly supposed, a meek man, then the manners of the possessing classes are, at the moment, most Christlike. The war has, of course, hastened the process under which the State is being penetrated in every direction by official channels through which the people can be kept under surveillance, and by means of which their aspirations after comfort can be satisfied whenever these aspirations threaten to become dangerous to the established order.

On the other hand, the Labour world everywhere manifests a mental activity that has been unknown since the days of the Chartists. The teaching that emanates in Great Britain from the Central Labour College, by means of the Plebs League, is the most challenging of all because it is the one that is definitely class-conscious. But the whole intellectual movement



at the back of the political ferment is varied and individual in every conceivable way, according to the characteristics of the many groups of thinkers which gather under the banner of Labour. And these schools range on the one hand from Marxianism to the Fabianism which is barely to be distinguished from advanced Liberalism. But the vast majority of the readers of the capitalistic Press have no more notion of the existence of all this body of thought than if it were developing on the next planet. None the less it is forming the ideals of the worker into a hard kernel of opinion and he, when he comes on the stage as the master-builder of the new epoch, will undoubtedly work into the structure he erects the lessons he has received at the hands of many a touring lecturer or stump orator who perhaps rejoices to add the term "gaol-bird" to his name in place of the academic Master or Bachelor. For the prison is to-day in England, as long ago it was in Russia, the school of idealism both in politics and religion.

Almost all these lessons are economic, yet by no means, as the class in power would naturally assume, necessarily expressive of the idea of spoliation. Labour teachers, in the main, leave top-dog aspirations to their betters who have so long been in that position. For the essence of the workers' reading of history is logical, and that to a surprising degree. These Labour teachers, as they trace the various phases of

land-holding, of wealth production and wealth distribution, deduce just the one idea that, because these processes have changed so many times in the past, it will therefore be fairly easy to change them once more. Following the most scientific of the socialist thinkers, Marx, they persist in reading every department of history in the light of economic fact, studying in detail how the *primum mobile* of the human universe, production, brought wars or encouraged peace, gave rise to religions and philosophies and created, not only political institutions, but the very passions of differing ages of which poets sang and to which artists gave expression in tone and word and pigment. Marx gazed out on this land of history re-read, but these men get out their foot-rules and measuring-rods for the surveying of it.

To show how this line of argument works, let us take as an instance the fact of the existence of Gothic cathedrals. The orthodox historians account for them by telling us of certain religious views that were combined, at the moment, with a very remarkable political and artistic development. To the Marxian school they were the result of organised production by guilds. Though these buildings, of course, prove the existence of fine artistic capacity as well as of great wealth, the root cause at the back of everything, of the art as well as the wealth, is the increase in power which attends every exercise of human

powers under co-operative production. And the cathedrals resulted, although they were wrought by wage-earners, from the free scope that was given, not to competition, but to co-operation by means of the guilds. For co-operation so heightens each man's peculiar talent, so raises it above itself when he works in fellowship, that it is scarcely recognisable for the simple thing it was when he worked alone. The coral polyp that builds by the side of a brother polyp merely adds a fresh portion to the reef, but a man working freely by the side of another man changes the very structure of the thing they build together.

The workers are actually by this reading of history producing a school of thought on their own account. It is a volte-face to assert, as Labour teachers do, that changes in production have not resulted from changed ideals, but the other way round, and that the single law of progress has been that, when an old method of production was proved to yield less in output than a new one, that new one inevitably took the place of the older one. Thus, by this reasoning, slavery did not give place to the wage system because it had grown immoral in men's eyes, but simply because it became an acknowledged fact that wage-earning workers produce more than slaves.

The first thing that strikes one in this theory is the mechanical view of evolution it presents. Mind and spirit are now made to depend on an

unfolding process in the direction of which man has had no hand at all. Each step has followed automatically on the preceding one, and all the "taking thought" about which humanity has been so keen is merely due to an illusion. These proletarian prophets are the children of the machine: to them all things are machine-made, even human faith.

This school of thought is also fatalistic. The changes of the past had to be, and the changes of the future have yet to be. Thou canst not add, by all thy zeal, to the cubits of humanity's stature. One of the chief roots of this fatalism is not machine-born sentiment only, but that peasant creed which makes Thomas Hardy's women, both the sinister and the sorrowful, profess one confession and one only: "It was to be."

On the other hand, mechanical and fatalistic as is this reading of the records, it yet enshrines, and far more powerfully than the orthodox interpretation, the principle of the increasing purpose. At a turning-point like the present, when those who desire new things are chiefly conscious of the strength of old ones, to read history in Labour's way is to be sure that now, as always, the mandate of the hidden purpose will ultimately be obeyed. Whatever power it may be that works behind humanity's evolution, this interpretation of it does at any rate declare that the force is as certain in its action as any

of the other laws of nature which we recognise as unfailing in their own sphere. Nor is the theory actually an embittered one. It was by no fault—in the long run—of the slave-dealers that there were once slaves. Slavery marked merely a part of the road along which the race had to travel. Nor do these theorists attempt to estimate the varying degrees of misery produced by the several stages of the journey. They do not even try to realise what the final bourne may be. It is all, stages and bourne alike, a turning of the wheel of life that cannot be evaded.

When they apply this method to present-day events they are as drastic in their "cuts." Louis Boudin's exposition, for instance, of the causes of this war is a startling instance in point. For he ignores all theories of world-dominion in the realm of thought. He discounts Nietzscheanism and fails to notice von Treitschke. To him the theory of the influence of these two Slavs on Teutonic thought is the fanciful creation of an idle mind that cannot get to grips with reality. Boudinism sees the predisposing cause of the war in—steel: it watches Germany piling up its figures in pig-iron, till that country finally overtakes Great Britain and so comes forward as master in the one predominant world industry of the age. Competition in textiles does not produce war, because cotton can be sold in undeveloped lands without concessions from the governments: hence the peace of the Victorian

age. But steel rails mean that each competing company calls on its respective government to support its effort. Thus governments come into competition with one another till, under the cover of diplomacy, a war is prepared in which steel heaps up profits in another form, namely, for armaments. Beside pig-iron, according to Boudin, the doctrine of the Superman as a cause of war is mere moonshine.

To such thinkers society is an organic unity that, existing from age to age, accomplishes its life-process by a series of developments in the body which are accompanied by mental and spiritual changes such as also occur in the individual whenever individual growth is accomplished. Childhood, puberty, middle-age and old age have, in a man, their different moods, but these moods do not produce the physical changes of which they are but a symptom. So it is with states.

The strange contradiction between the theory and practice of these Labour theorists lies in the fact that, while insisting on the mechanism of all change, they still, as prophets of progress, continue to struggle and fight with an energy which makes the free-will thinkers seem as inactive as a crew of Seven Sound Sleepers. The engine works, one says to them, or so you believe: why then do you get out and push with muscles that are feeble indeed beside the energy you believe in? Besides, you may, after

all, be pushing against, not with, the force. Determinism is an awkward creed to put in practice, and fatalism always seems a misfit on the back of a man of the West.

But however this may be, to these thinkers the socialised holding of wealth is as certain as the rising of to-morrow's sun, and the change will be accompanied, as have all similar changes, by alterations in ideals. And as cannibalism came to be regarded as a horrible custom when animal meat was easily procurable, so in the generations to come it will be unthinkable for a man to enjoy a personal plenty which implies that several of his brothers are going empty. It will be unthinkable because it will be neither desirable nor even possible. That is the process: but all the same, no doubt, the pulpits will echo with pious rhodomontade about the spontaneous production of the spiritual sense. For to the makers of leather there is nothing like leather, and to the dealers in spirituality it is inconceivable that this virtue should not stand, so to speak, on its own legs.

So they prophesy.

But whatever may be the view we take of this theory, at any rate social production, when it comes, will but be a reversion to the spirit of the primitive type of production, out of which private ownership grew. For in looking into primitive communism we are undoubtedly viewing the very warp and woof of human nature

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itself. And what we find there is good, especially to us, who seem born to come into contact with nothing but human selfishness.

In early tribal times we see that the first instinct is to secure that none of the tribe shall want. Even strangers who come from outside are acknowledged as having a claim to sustenance. Thus in the hunting epoch the game that the young men kill is left behind on the foray for the whole tribe, as it advances in its slower progress, to share out equally; in the agricultural period the land to be tilled is divided with exact justice between every family, and is cultivated under common customs which are fixed for all the tribesmen. Throughout the era of personal property we have been wandering further and further away from the deep instinct of our kind which bids us see to it that all share what all have produced. In the system set up by feudalism this instinct received a European application and gained a legal sanction. Under that system a place was set for every man at the dining-table of the world. True, the masterless man was an outlaw, but only by his own fault. There was a place for him once before he forfeited it. But under the feudal order—strange and significant change—the share of food enjoyed by each was not equal, as in the early communal days. Each order had a different status and differing duties—and the platters were differently served with food. Still, each



had the platter that went with his individual niche in the constitution.

With the fall of this system the root principle of social life was forgotten and the Reformation, more political than religious as it was, gave the final blow to the old communal principle. With the clang of the monastery doors in the faces of the poor the penury of the many and the enrichment of the few was established as the law of the world, till in the eighteenth century it was even impious to try to overcome this rule "ordained by God."

To the Marxist of course this simply means that an awkward but essential stage of the road had been reached. The enclosing of common lands and consequent establishment of landlordism played its part in the increase of agricultural output by means of the utilisation of forest and moor, and by the improvement in agricultural methods. This was one stage, and the next was reached when industrial output leapt beyond all previous estimates by the setting up of the capitalistic undertakings which flourish now as the trusts of America and the "rings" of Europe. These increases in production produced in their turn the mass of machine-fed, machine-bred people who are at once the problem of the future and its solution. These have been shown by the example of individual initiative and by cut-throat competition how to produce wealth. Left to himself the worker would never have

learnt this; the source of production, raw material, and its driving force, power, had to be handled by the few men, in order that the many might learn the trick of the business. The difficulty now is to prove that the efforts of wage-earners actually are less productive than the initiative of owner-producers. We may think it proved that the law of increasing returns under new labour conditions worked successfully in the past, but to believe in its persistent truth to-day is somewhat of an Act of Faith. We argue that because co-operative ownership in a factory does not place the output of that business' far above the production of those run on wage-earners' labour, therefore the law fails. And even in the case of a whole nation working on co-operative, or nationalised, lines of production it is difficult to prove that it would outstrip the work of countries producing on a competitive system. And in fact the free interplay of co-operation of nation with nation is necessary before full advantage can be taken of the inventive genius of each country, as well as of the natural advantages of soil and climate in each. This advantage once taken, the gross output of the whole world will far surpass that of the present system. What might not German science, English practicality, and French logic do, for instance, if they worked together? It would be a world, too, in which Japanese accuracy and Chinese thoroughness were neither despised nor

exploited, but merely invited to play their part. In the enormous stimulation of a society in which the career was open to all talents, national as well as individual, the goad of the wage-sheet would naturally go its way into the limbo of things, past and gone, as naturally as did the scourge of the slave-driver, the single-furrow plough and the handloom.

If this forecast be in general true, then Marxianism is but a half-truth. For what is it that is going to establish the Utopia of a free world-state where private property is no longer the object of all existence? Apparently nothing but the human spirit itself that, by groping upwards, hits the truth unawares and sets up a system which does actually increase output, but which was not set up for that purpose, but rather for the abstract ends of right and justice. It is, then, on the way to accomplish the Social Revolution because it possesses the instinct for freedom which acts, not for the sake of output, but simply because the heart of man turns naturally towards the light.

In ideals, in philosophy, the age of property is already passing. When any book nowadays is written that looks forward to the future its thought almost always hinges on the philosophy of non-possession. The wonder, the beauty, of individual possession is already passing for the finer minds of to-day, as it has already lost its attraction for the foremost among us. "Every

rabbit his own hutch " might have made a good election cry in Victorian times when men loved curtains and shutters, and a little world apart was the ideal of each. But now it is the open road that is sought by the pioneers, the open road with but the lightest pack on the back. Possession and the joy of it is already spoilt for the emerging human type: it is in non-possession that man best possesses his own soul. The wealth of the world poured out for all to use freely: that is the marching order of the future. And talk as the Marxist may of wealth-production as the magic wand of human progress, the change in ideals which he describes as following increase in output seems to occur even before the change itself, to be the pioneer rather than the camp-follower of economic transformation.

Meanwhile the bulk of men remain half-unconscious that they are the sport of forces which make change absolutely certain. When urged to look into the future they buttress themselves up behind the handsome appointments of the banking system, by the whole splendid façade of the industrial age. It cannot be altered, it is so solid, they say. But if it goes, how can we possibly escape boredom? If all the interest of acquiring and keeping property is to go, and all the excitement of handling it, what will be left to live for?

Apart from passion and affection, it is true that the one mental joy of the classes in power,

and of most of those out of it, consists purely in property and the power which springs from it. The statesman nowadays regards his state-craft as a matter of handling "assets," even when these are human. The doctrine of the State has been carried so far, as this war proves, that men no longer exist for their own purposes but as bricks in the structure of national life. And this is as true in this country as in Germany, though we conceal the fact very carefully. This sense of property it is that, in politics, creates empires as a product of its working, and war as a by-product. In the world of the individual it is not only the stockbroker, the banker or the manufacturer whose thoughts all centre round property, for the professional classes live in the same way. Things acquired make the joy of all lives by the time middle-age is reached, even in the proletarian world—houses, motors, servants, furniture, stocks and shares; all the things I have "made" by my skill. Only the rare men, a few artists, a handful of scientists and teachers, a skilled craftsman or two, live by that other instinct, the joy of creation, for the joy of the work done, of the thing made, of the new force brought out into the world, for, in a word, the cultivation of one little plot in the great garden of creative activity. In the new Utopia, to the joy of these men will be added, possibly, an appreciation by their fellows, which is not theirs to-day. But for most others,

the vast majority who are absorbed solely in possessing, the vacuity of existence will be enormously increased. Again, there are in every country large numbers of persons whose chief satisfaction is derived from the monotonous repetition of movement by a pen, a tool, or a verbal formula. And in a business world where labour-saving is a law the number of occupations which yield this satisfaction will be much reduced.

We can scarcely escape the conclusion that, in order to enjoy the new world, a new race will be wanted, either one so essentially great that it is on a plane where the joy of creation is a reality, or, at any rate, a race that can be "orchestrated" to the joint working out of some conception that is wide enough to claim the services of all types of character and all degrees of mental power. As in a Wagnerian opera the full power of every actor and musician is strung up to secure the final effect, so it may be possible for a nation to realise, individual by individual, its place in one concerted harmony.

But that will not be until the immediate problem has been solved of how to free ourselves from the everlasting pre-occupation with bodily needs which now makes up the life-task of nine-tenths of the individuals comprising humanity. To do this we require an organised system of production and distribution that shall be set up like a great framework of automatic supply among which human beings will, as individuals,

move freely, think freely, feel freely. And when the food supply is so arranged nearly all our conventions will go; for these spring from fear of our neighbour's opinions, from a sense that if we don't satisfy him, he will somehow starve us by diverting custom from us.

"Therefore all the quaint superstitions, the old world maxims, the venerable laws which the ingenuity of savage philosophers elaborated long ago, and which old women at chimney corners still impart as treasures of great price to their descendants gathered round the cottage fire on winter evenings—all these antique fancies clustered, all these cobwebs of the brain were spun about the path of the old king, the human god, who, immeshed in them like a fly in the toils of a spider, could hardly stir a limb for the threads of custom, 'light as air but strong as links of iron,' that crossing and re-crossing each other in an endless maze bound him fast into a network of observances from which death or deposition alone could release him."

These taboos of custom are around, not the feet of our kings only, but of us all. We carefully break our children in to them and the higher the rank to which a child belongs the more carefully is he "broken." And until taboos are all gone we shall never know what manner of men we are. But they will be with us, always crippling free development, until economic freedom is at last attained.

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## Chapter VI.—Change

### Phase III.—Self-Determination

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**W**HEN one turns from politics and economics to the values which are here called spiritual it is towards a subject in which the terms used are the chief obstacle to clear thought. For in this realm every word has been overworked and, having been made to mean so much, has actually come to signify nothing particular. And in the whole vocabulary there is not a more meaningless word than “spiritual.” It sometimes stands for psychical, to signify the science dealing with the hidden powers of the human personality; it is used instead of “religious,” meaning by that the creeds into which man has crystallised his belief about his relationship to the universe; and finally “spirit” is often employed to indicate the part of the human being which is sometimes supposed to be divine and therefore immortal.

In these pages the word “spiritual” is used to name that in man’s nature which turns to other men in love and fellow-feeling. It is assumed as true that all men possess this faculty in germ, and that in many it has been powerful



enough to develop a sense of unity with all that lives. This power of feeling love and unity is here called "spiritual" simply for want of a better word. The faculty is not mental, because it seems to be known in the lives below man: it is not a faith since it is experienced as a sensation, and yet neither is it purely instinctive because, in man, it assumes a reasoned form. So one calls this sense of fellowship, of oneness, spiritual.

Now the very essence of this quality is free exercise, directed and hindered by nothing external. No authority whatever can make a man feel one with his brother or with the life coursing through other forms. Therefore this "spirituality" implies freedom, and all exercise of authority over it is either pure blasphemy, or, from the standpoint of reason, imbecility. This power of feeling kinship turns on its own axis: it is self-determined, being the central expression of life by the being who feels it. Against it the authority of priest and pope is as futile in one direction as is the power of king and emperor in another. Men may be ordered to do things that are good—or are bad, and they may obey, but to tell them to love a brother, to draw towards him, is—neither here nor there. You cannot be obeyed, though of course you may persuade a man that such a feeling is desirable. And there the matter will end. In the kingdom of the individual, love "bloweth where it

listeth," and in the kingdom of nationality like gathers by the side of like to form a common body of custom, feeling and language, according to the same law of interior attraction. And it makes no difference that the official church and the official state proceed on the opposite assumption and appeal to authority. In the kingdom of the spirit authority does not "run": it is a writ that no man actually regards. And when it is said, as it is everywhere being said to-day, that self-determination is emerging as the law of political grouping and the rule of personal life, we simply mean that this inner liberty which has always, of course, been a fact is now beginning to be recognised as such.

And this marks the third great change that is coming in the present age. For all those who have assumed positions of superiority find themselves challenged. And as a result, of course, all these persons flare up and fight fiercely in defence of their position.

The most perfect antithesis of self-determination is militarism, for that system takes the whole man and not his time and physical strength only. In proportion as it is effective it atrophies his will, clouds his reason, and coarsens his emotions. It says to a man: obedience is the only duty required from you, and if this obedience necessitates your firing on your children or your mates, that is no business of yours. It is unnecessary to labour this point now, when the truth of

this statement is eating into the heart of millions of men who were once comparatively free. But what is not realised by those outside is the careful way in which the ordinary training of the soldier is calculated deliberately to deaden intelligence. This is done by a perpetual round of meaningless duties, by broken rest and weary drills, by keeping noses to the grindstone perpetually. Here, for instance, is the diary of a private's week, giving hour by hour the time-table of his existence in barracks. Anyone who reads it through will see that the object of the process is not, as is commonly fancied, to make men strong in body only. It is intended obviously to make them, at the same time, incapable of initiative and as free from the hesitations of thought as any weary Hamlet could possibly desire to be.

*Sunday, 16th June.*

Awoke about 6 a.m. Heard the Angelus from a neighbouring R.C. Church. My birthday to-day. I wished myself many *happier* returns.

6.30 a.m.—Reveill  as usual, but there is less hurry this morning. Breakfast at 8 a.m. worse than usual—I suppose everyone (cooks included) feels entitled to some kind of respite from the week's dreary round of duties.

10.15 a.m.—Fall in for C. Parade. What a mockery it is! The sorting out of C. of E. and Nonconformists is quite a business. C. of E. has it by a large majority. I have permission to

attend the Unitarian service at Stephen's Green but I *must parade* first, so I go with the Wesleyans. Outside the Barracks I pursue my way alone. The service does not commence until noon. I found it quite inspiring (perhaps because I was feeling a little down in the mouth). The address was on the "Taint of Insincerity," and the minister introduced readings from Gosse's *Father and Son*. I shall go again.

1.40 p.m.—I arrived back. Dinner long since over but I got some from the cook-house. The Sgt. Cook is a decent chap. No afternoon off for me, nor for many others. I must now clean all my equipment for Guard Parade at 4.30. I settle down with a heavy heart to this eternal business of polishing straps and buckles and fitting them all together. Scarcely finished by 3.45, which is tea-time for men on Guard. I rush to the Mess-room, secure a piece of bread and jam and a mug of tea.

4.30—Fall in for Guard. The formality of inspections lasts an hour, during the greater part of which we stand motionless in the Barrack Square. Then we march away to our duties. I shall not return for 24 hours, doing 2 hours on sentry duty with 4 hours off. Still there are some compensations, for I shall be able to read a little perhaps, or write some letters.

*Monday, 17th June.*

I scarcely know Monday from the preceding

day for I have not taken off my clothes since Saturday night. I have done sentry duty from 7.30 to 9.30 p.m., from 1.30 to 3.30 a.m., from 7.30 to 9.30 a.m., from 1.30 to 3.30 p.m. It is a tedious affair for one is ordered to be always on the alert, yet it is difficult to fix one's attention on *nothing* for two hours. The Orderly Officer came at 2 a.m. with the Cpl. and spoke sharply because I did not at once spring to attention and salute.

5.45 p.m.—Once again I fit all my equipment together into Marching Order and we return to Barracks. I was very tired but I went for a little walk until 9.30 p.m. I could not get away until 6.45 p.m., as I had to unfasten all my equipment in order to extricate my waist-belt which I *must* wear when walking out.

9.30 p.m.—I return and go at once to see the "Detail" for to-morrow. I am on "Inlying Piquet" so I must get all my equipment fitted together for Fighting Order before I go to bed. I was not finished by 10.15 (Lights out), but thanks to the Daylight Saving Order I can see by natural means beyond this hour.

*Tuesday, 18th June.*

I had to get up before Reveillé to get my rifle cleaned for inspection.

7.10 p.m.—Parade for Inlying Piquet. The inspection lasts about half-an-hour. I must parade in Fighting Order all day and be ready for

any call, so I am confined to Barracks to-day. I had no time to sweep the floor under my bed, so I rush back to the Barrack Room to do this before the Orderly Officer arrives.

8.15 a.m.—Breakfast. 9—Musketry Parade. 10.15—Squad Drill. 11.15 to 11.45—Break, during which I have to get my jacket and puttees off for Physical Training at 11.45. At 12.45 we are dismissed, and have to put on puttees and jacket for Dinner Parade, which follows immediately. No time to wash or I shall be late in the scramble for dinner.

2 to 4.45 p.m.—Platoon Drill and Bayonet Fighting. I cannot go out after tea as the piquet may be called out.

*Wednesday, 19th June.*

6.30 a.m.—Reveill  . Company Inspection in Drill Order, so I must get up at once to shave, alter my equipment, polish it, and also my buttons, and clean my rifle before 7.40.

At 8 a.m. we are dismissed, and Breakfast Parade follows immediately. Pte. Smith got "checked" yesterday for a dirty rifle, so he is on Defaulters' Parade. He had to be up before Reveill   in order to parade at 6.45, and he missed breakfast this morning (it was not served until 8.20) so as to be on Defaulters' Parade at 8.30. He will do this for four days, the last Defaulters' Parade being at 10 p.m. This sort of punishment is very irksome and is called "Jankers" in the Army.

Parades as usual until 4.45. I went out this evening from 6 p.m. until 9.30, but I had to stay up late to get ready for Company Inspection in the morning.

*Thursday, 20th June.*

Company Inspection at 7.40. Marching Order. I scamped the cleaning of my equipment (as I must clean it for Guard to-night), but it was not noticed. One man checked for dirty boots, another for long hair, and another for dirty buttons. I must be careful or I shall be on Defaulters' Parade. Breakfast was not served until 8.15. I had all my time taken up to alter my equipment to Drill Order for next parade at 9 a.m.

No parade after dinner as I am on Guard, but the time will be fully occupied in cleaning equipment, buttons, boots, rifle, and bayonet. 3.45—Tea. 4.15—Guard Inspection. With a struggle I get my cleaning finished in time and parade at 4.15 in full marching order, rifle, bayonet and steel helmet. Names are checked by the Orderly Sergt. Then comes the inspection of the Orderly Officer, and about 4.50 the Reg. Sergt.-Major signals to the Bugler to sound the Officers' Call. A minute later two or three Officers enter the Barrack Square from the Officers' Mess. The Orderly Officer has meanwhile given the order to Slope Arms, and he now salutes the Captain of the Week, and as it were "presents" the men

on parade to him. Having returned the Orderly Officer's salute the Captain brings the Guards to the "Order" position again. Then all bayonets must be unfixed. First the men are inspected all over again as to the correctness of their clothing and equipment, then a second time for the examination of rifles. This ceremony having been completed, bayonets are fixed again, the Officers take up their positions and the various Guards "march past" the Captain to their duties. It is 5.30 p.m. before this happy relief comes. Sometimes the formalities are disturbed by one of the "men" (they are only 18 years old) falling out in a faint. It is a severe strain for a weakly lad to have to stand still for an hour with a heavy pack on his back and a tin hat upon his head. The ritual of the Mass is prosaic in comparison with this military function. The Guards do not complete their duties until 6 p.m. or later on the following evening.

*Friday, 21st June.*

After a night in bed I parade as usual at 7.40 in drill order for Company Inspection. After breakfast I am on fatigue, and my work is to scrub the floors and tables in the Guard-room, clean the windows and brush down the walls. This occupies the time until dinner. We arrived back late and had to scramble for our food. The boys eat and behave like cannibals, complaining all the time. Parade as usual until



4.45 in the afternoon. I have to attend a Clothing Parade at 7.30 p.m., and afterwards clean my rifle and equipment for Company Inspection in the morning.

*Saturday, 22nd June.*

The same old thing. Company Inspection, 7.40 in Marching Order. All rifles are examined carefully and their numbers checked on Friday. Coy. Commander complained because cap badges and chin straps were not well polished, and I was ordered to get my boots repaired and my hair cut at once. I have not had a bath this week. How can one find time for all these things? I am on Hospital Piquet to-night, and parade in Marching Order with the Guard at 4.30. Another night of weary aimless watching of property. But no arms are carried on this duty. I got through the Guard Inspection all right, but one man was dropped on heavily for having an empty water-bottle.

*Saturday, 29th June.*

Sentry-go all day to-day. It is better than drill anyhow, but one feels very jaded after sleeping in one's clothes.

Returned to Barracks 6.15 p.m. Got away for three hours and arrived back 9.30. Shall have time to-morrow to clean my belt for Church Parade. But what time have I to get my trousers scrubbed, handkerchiefs and socks washed, or

letters written? "Who shall deliver us from the bondage of this death?"

The soldier who wrote this describes how he lies awake at night in his barracks, which date from Napoleonic times, thinking of "all the soldiers since 1785 who have slept in the same room. I think of their strange uniforms, their ugly wasted lives, and their violent deaths. Still militarism goes on more rampant than ever."

And here is this man doing what all the weary foolery of button-cleaning, etc., is meant to prevent!

Its blasphemy against the human spirit is the true condemnation of militarism, and in this sense it is a greater evil than war itself. For to blow a man to bits is but to send him to death a few years before his time, but to make him a part of a machine is to put back the work of creation by which he had reached the stage of manhood. It is worse than murder, since it is only by the assumption that a soldier is not responsible for the deaths he causes that it is possible to obtain the acquiescence of millions of men in this business of wholesale murder. In other words, a man's self-directed life is over before ever he reaches the firing line.

But if we dig into this wrong of military tyranny we find it based on an instinct deeper than any that causes mere war, on something

more fundamental than love of commercial gain, or the megalomania of empire and the hysteria of mysticism which finds violence purifying. All these bring war, but the roots of militarism feed on something much more fundamental than these acquired characteristics.

Have you ever observed that human beings never find themselves in the wrong—that whatever “we” do is to us somehow justified by some circumstances we should certainly have overlooked if we had been discussing somebody else’s action? “We” are, in fact, always right. “We” have more just intentions than the other man, be he who he will. The prig is born in us all, not made. And therefore when a majority forms itself in a nation, they set out to “punish” the criminal, although, if they could only be got to sit down and think about it coolly, many persons in that majority would acknowledge that, to the eyes of omniscience, it is very probable the judge on the bench and the jury in the box are more guilty than the wretch in the dock. In the eyes of humorous angels few spectacles of earth can be more amusing than a law-court. Except perhaps a War Aims meeting either in the Allied or the Central countries, where speaker after speaker, getting up and denouncing the crimes of the enemy, cries out that he must be punished. For each side is “out” to punish the other; and each side is, as human beings always are, right. But neither

of them possesses enough humour to perceive that the punishment they do so loudly acclaim is itself—the crime. When Mr Havelock Wilson talks about 15,000 British seamen foully murdered, he forgets that what murdered them was war—carried to its logical extreme. For war means this: to kill as many as possible of those you are out to punish. And neither the blockade, the aeroplane over a town, nor the U-boat discriminates between the classes of the enemy.

Militarism, then, like the feudal system itself, finds its justification in the attitude of superiority. Of this feeling the barrack and the battlefield is one kind of fruit and the prison another. But while many see what militarism is, few, indeed, ever consider what goes on inside the prison walls. Think of a great building with galleries running round the central hall, one above the other. On to these galleries, which are defended by high railings, the cell-doors open. Above the ground floor a net is stretched. This is to prevent (*a*) the suicide of a prisoner, (*b*) the murder of a warder, or (*c*) the hurling of missive weapons on the gaolers' heads as they move about on the lower floor. If you meet a row of prisoners on the march and you are a stranger, the order is given for them to turn their faces to the wall till you have passed. You hear the barrack phrases: "Right turn," and all the rest of it. For what we have here is only another phase of militarism. If you visit a prisoner, for

the twenty minutes during which he is allowed visible proof of a friend's existence, he is penned, like a jungle beast in the zoo, behind a grille. Only, being more feared than lion or tiger, he is behind two rows of bars, instead of one, with a gaoler stationed in the space between the bars. Some day in the future these prisons will be museums to show, like convict hulks, what the older generations did under the impulse to punish. But no museum will be able to show the most horrible thing about the system—the perpetual brow-beating by which a man's will is to be broken. Once we made it the object of all education to break the wills of our children. We still have no wiser idea than will-breaking when it comes to dealing with those who give trouble. In the penal system, however, it is the troublesome person himself who is broken, whereas militarism is even meaner, for it enslaves one set of men on the off-chance that another set of men may give trouble!

Militarism thrives in other places besides gaols and barracks; for the great spectacle of the present war has been that of the Tribunals. Here we see bodies of selected citizens enquiring into the most private business and domestic affairs of their humbler fellows, ruining one man's business and giving to another a monopoly of custom, sending men at their caprice into servitude, and often, of course, to death. Also under the present military age limit we have

the additional irony of men themselves freed from service by their supposed value as administrators trying the cases of those considerably less physically fit and putting them under a system by which they will be dispatched, like cattle, from one place to another, generally without knowing whether their destination is to be the East Coast, or the other side of the world. If ever such a thing could be conceived as an orgy of order, that is what we are living through at the moment.

To such things leads this love of punishing others. And the prison system with its science of cleanliness and the solitary confinement which drives men mad, as well as the 'senseless barrack "duties," are both adopted for the same reason as the method in boarding-schools, where children are kept "on the go" from morning to night lest they should get into mischief. "Send 'em to bed tired" is the motto of school, barrack or gaol, and this because we hate and fear human nature. We look on natural impulse as a thing that must be stamped upon. We are never happier than when we have got someone in our clutches to whom we may say, "This is the way and I'll see you walk in it." And when exercising such powers we assume airs, as those of weary Titans carrying a world on our shoulders. Yet our hearts love it.

No wonder then that when self-direction is acclaimed as the principle of life we rise and

fight it, daring anyone to try and put an end to such a healthy state of things as war wherein every man is put in his place and kept there. But, if war should unfortunately and prematurely come to an end, we can always fall back on tariffs, which will not only go on "punishing," but may haply induce another war. These joys in prospect make us even forget that punishment is a two-edged weapon which has a trick of often cutting those who use it, so that in the end both the gaoler and the gaoled find themselves wounded.

At first sight the principle of the League of Nations seems contradictory to this claim for self-determination. For, just at the moment when internationalism has discovered that there is no such entity as a sovereign state, but that all states must acknowledge the inter-action of their relations with one another, there appears for the individual race and the individual person a declaration of the right to develop according to the law of the inner life. From without, then, we see a move towards stricter claims, and from within an advance towards self-evolved freedom. The spirit of nationality is breaking down to give a wider synthesis, while on the other hand the racial soul is speaking on its own account in defence of self-development. On the one hand there is to be an enormous framework of universal law and on the other national and individual *laissez faire*.

The contradiction is only apparent, for in

fact the wider an organisation is the greater the freedom of the several parts of it—other things being equal. Thus the people of the Continent are weighted with the heavy obligation of forced military service, and if the present structure of society exists, Great Britain will also be gripped in the same strait-jacket of tyranny. But a world-state will ultimately free all countries from conscription. Again, when empires compete with one another, the country that desires to dominate must tune all its inhabitants to one emotion, so that every act and thought shall be subservient to the imperial purpose. Put every man in a wider framework than that of Empire, set the races up on their feet in an international comity, and neither man nor race need undergo the soul-devastating process known as “tuning” to a common ideal. To be a citizen of the world is to be a far freer man than to remain a citizen of this country, or of any other.

But before any of these results can be obtained, either individually or racially, we must rid ourselves of the notion that the one power by which order can be kept is force. And that is very difficult for any of Teutonic genius. To dethrone the rule of force as the sole instrument of order will probably call for the jurisdiction in the world's affairs of another nationality than either the Anglo-Saxon or the German. For everywhere the Teuton believes in one thing: in the



establishment of the will of the majority by force. And while that is the principle of the world's government true self-determination is impossible of achievement. Burning and executing to enforce this will is somewhat out of fashion—at least in this country. But we still resort to imprisonment and, in order to satisfy the craving for stricter measures, we have, during the war, strung up our system of imprisonment for political offenders till they suffer a far more severe punishment than that meted out to the most degraded criminals. And in less obvious ways we force our ideals on all classes that are weak enough to form our prey; the ideals of the passing generations are imposed on the rising one by every possible device, from education in "tone" to the penalties of worldly failure and social ostracism, and in the wage-earning class by the threat of starvation. To make character "lineable" is still the main occupation of teachers and preachers, who habitually distrust the God within every man and conceive that any divergence from the standard of the majority must be prevented, if necessary, by force. And those who talk of democracy still mean the enforcement of the will of the majority on the minority—by force.

To set up a world-wide League of Nations and put it in the hands of such persons would be simply to create a world-wide Servile State. It might establish obedience, feed, clothe and house the inhabitants of the earth and make them,

up to a certain point, intelligent. None the less, it would be a régime under which the people lived by bread and circuses, although the bread might be all the produce of the teeming earth and the circuses Wagner operas and Bernard Shaw's Lectures. The people would be empty shells of individuals, alive in no real sense of the word.

The only power which can prevent this consummation is the emergence of humanity's trust in its own inner nature. It is a definite creed, this trust, and it simply says that every human being, the most degraded or the most drilled and obedient, possesses within him a spark of self-directing life that is divine, and that the supreme right of the human being is to develop this spark, as long as his development in no way conflicts with the self-development of his neighbours. And against this human right, the authority of religion, the law of the State, the prudence of the elderly, and the wisdom of the wise will be ranged in vain when the people have actually learnt the meaning of the greatest saying of modern times: "Where men think lightly of the laws, there the great city stands."

To supply a framework for the free play of this spirit is the work of all political activity: to arouse this spirit into wakefulness the task of all education, and to bring it back to health the work of all reform. For punishment in this scheme of things there is no place whatever.

For what is there, in fact, to punish in the case of the greatest malefactor on earth? His crimes mean that his divinity has been buried under the rubbish of a corrupt social order or of a miserable body inherited from the evil and ignorance of the past. What has to be done is to fan into life that spark within. But if this is impossible, because of our ignorance of character and its springs, the only alternative is restraint, but never torture. And torture is by no means too strong a word to apply to the western prison system. In this almost all the human alleviations, even of a brutal method, such as Dostoieffsky describes in *The House of the Dead*, are absent. An occasional outburst of brutality is far more bearable than a system rigidly pursued, day in day out, for stamping down every fragment of will and personality.

All formularies are out of place when once human initiative acts freely. This frames no creed, but rather makes cradle-songs. For free choice, the law of each man to his place, or of like to like, appears to act unerringly whenever it is left free from the interference of the human will. Even birth itself would seem to call into life sets of persons of similar tastes in the great congeries which we call nations. "The kingdom of God is within you" was addressed, not to man as man only, but to the Pole as a Pole, to the Jew as a Jew, to the African as an African. To us this kingdom of self-direction is a strange

one, for it possesses as well as the qualities we call good, those other instincts which we condemn. For in this matter of native character all the nations that call themselves advanced are, as yet, but prim school teachers whose self-confidence is only equalled by their ignorance.

It is this ignorance, moreover, which makes us timid, so that every manifestation of new power, every expression of a new vision, is always hailed with hatred and has to go through a period of persecution before it is accepted as part of the recognised order. And to repeat this eternal process over and over again is surely an imbecility which we might by now have learnt to avoid from the example of the past. We distrust, too, all originality—unless it is of the sort which, by familiarity, has ceased to be original. In India we cannot trust the Hindu because subtlety of intelligence is still strange to us: in Germany we try to stamp the genius of Saxony or Bavaria with the hall-mark of Prussia. And, carrying the principle still further, we force our fashions of life on the globe and call this process Imperialism.

It is this criminal instinct of the ruling races which bids fair to ruin the otherwise good design of the League of Nations. Unless, indeed, in that assembly either the class of the workers with their more generous "let live" policy gets the upper hand or, what is more likely, a race as yet untried, a more free and freedom-loving

people, comes to the front. It seems, in fact, that both these things may happen when once the powers get together round the table of conciliation. Nor is there lacking a third feature of the situation that is full of possibilities towards a new and untried spirit of liberty. And that is the coming of the woman on to the stage of history. We shall need them all—the workers, the emerging race, whatever that may be, and the women—for the creation of the new atmosphere of tolerance without which the fairest political structure, the most just economic partition of wealth, will be useless.

But before all this can happen we must rid ourselves of the savage distrust of names, since, in the eyes of the timid, to call this principle of self-determination anarchy, is to condemn it unheard. The philosopher is not afraid, of course, of anarchy because he knows that many a fair creature gets an ugly name without deserving it. But as yet the average man is more tolerant of ideas than of names and, after all, it is on the habits of thought of the average that society is built up. And the average man is quite prepared to acknowledge that to settle disputes by the law-court instead of the duel was an advance: in the same way he can be got to see that international rule is better than war for the resolution of political strife. Yet, in fact, this replacing of the duel by the system of law was but little advance, if any, towards the

elimination of hatred and the removal of the rankle of injustice : it was not much of a human advance, that is. For only that which furthers more expression of spirit, more tolerance of others' ways, is any real advance towards the light. And to gain such an advance mere alteration in structure is almost useless : with the new structure we need the new spirit that will grant to a race the right to live under the system it prefers and to change from one flag to another, if it so desires. In other words, if the League is to succeed, it will need to free every country from the will to grasp and hold what no longer consents to be grasped and held.

It seems impossible, tempers being what they are at the moment, to conceive of any such thing ever happening. Yet already, in private affairs, men hold things with a looser grasp than they did in the past. A man no longer expects, in general, to dictate to his children, or to settle their whole future for them, as he once did. And most women would be immensely surprised if they were expected to direct their existence by a man's sense of fitness. Nor do private individuals often "take the law into their own hands." But if they do, they are pulled up.

The trouble is that public morality lags so far behind private.

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## Chapter VII.—Art and the People

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**I**T was believed in the eighteenth century that the quality known as the artistic sense belonged only to people of rank and position who were supposed to secrete taste in much the same way as a flower produces scent. For the toilers art had no meaning, and with either its production or enjoyment they could not possibly be concerned. In the same way philosophers wrote on art all out of their own heads, so to speak. The process was for the would-be author of such a book to sit down and consider what ideas he was able to evolve by a contemplation of his own soul under the influence of, say, the Sistine Madonna or the Frieze of the Parthenon. Thus they conceived the doctrine of the Sublime and Beautiful, neither of which were they able to define accurately or to connect exactly with any known creations of the artistic spirit.

So far, however, from art having nothing to do with the people, the precise opposite is true. The people were the creators of it, and self-expression by art still remains the heritage of the workers although, for the time being, they are shut out from the possession of it. For art, as we know now, did not begin with the

Sublime and Beautiful; it started, as life does, with desire, with hunger, with a very definite desire and hunger, the meaning of which the habits of the savage and the child now make clear for us. In this way art began in the savage's idea of warming up the gods to activity just as he himself was warmed up for war and the chase by mimic warfare and mimic hunting, by dance and action and song. Divine activity was to be induced by the infectious spectacle of human energy; primitive art and savage ritual start, in fact, in the competitive principle, in the notion of "go one better" as between gods and men. When the savage feared that the seed would not spring, that Osiris, being dead, would never rise again, he prayed an action prayer, rehearsing the pushing of the seed and the resurrection of the dead Osiris, to incite the god of birth to rivalry. He acted first and then carved or painted the return of the life-bringer, that so the spirit which rules the sap and the germ might be spurred once more to the great play by which the life of plant and animal is renewed. His processional figures and ritual dances are thus but the challenge to the gods of food and procreation to be up and doing, even as man was up and doing.

Here probably comes in the root meaning of the word "Art," as that which is strained or stretched, that which acts as a bridge; in this case, between men and the unseen food-



givers. Art was also, even in those early days, the bridge between man and man, as when the Bushman of the delicate hands and feet drew his enemy in rock drawings with huge extremities so that he might fire his opponent to activity by insult, or when in ideographic figures the savage signified to his fellow clansmen the flight of the game, or the passage of the enemy, thus making the first bricks of the bridge called literature. Neolithic man, too, when he looked up at the night sky and shaped in gold a figure of the sickle moon, may well have had in mind, besides the idea of inducing the return of the great white globe, some desire to express to his fellows the emotions which possessed him at sight of the widening disk which lights night-wanderers on their forays. The man who is moved to awake the gods is also moved to awake the men who share his life of dependence on that which every now and then puts out a finger from the Unknown and touches him. Accordingly we find that art is a double bridge, serving in early ages to connect man with his immediate background of terrestrial life and with his fellows as, in later times, it is beginning to show signs of trying to connect him with a background so remote that it may be called cosmical, as well as with the depths of his own sub-conscious nature. In this fact lies the significance of the Futurism which tries to paint the unseen forces, of the new music which strives to render the

dim movements of man's unseen nature, and of the symbolism of Maeterlinck through whose plays blow the winds from that sea of mystery on which we are all, as one has said, "islanded."

An ancient scripture says that God made man in his own image. If this be so, then from the arts may be learnt more of the divine nature than in any other way, since in none of his works does man reveal himself as clearly as in his arts. We know more of the Egyptians by their bas-reliefs than through their edicts, and a backyard painted by Van Hooch is more illuminating as to the Dutch people than any Church Council. Incessantly stimulated as man has been through the ages by forces which he is only now beginning to recognise, as by forces which he has known since palæolithic times, we might learn something of his nature could we only watch him give back blow for blow. But we learn infinitely more when he pauses in recoil and finally, in stone or pigment, by sound or symbol, shows forth the spirit that is awakened in him. Why is it that we find it so hard to penetrate the animal soul? Is it not because it never pauses long enough to give us emotional expression? Even the cell-building bee or the dam-constructing beaver comes mentally nearer to us than the dog with all his affection or the cat with all his sensuous appeal. Always it is art that builds bridges between man and man, between man and his own past, between man and his future,

between man and the gods that create and destroy. It is not music alone that knows "the way I came": all the arts together know, or will know, the way we all came, whether we be jungle beast or philosopher, stone or tree.

It is this function of bridge building or, put in another way, of breaking down barriers, that gives to art its significance for the future. For that future is in the hands of those whose instincts gave birth to art, and in art is written more clearly than in any other of their activities what manner of men they are who carry with them the destinies of civilisation. It has been the work of the machine age to divorce the working class from art, but although the peasant has lost his folk-songs and the artisan his miracle plays, the stuff of the mind which created both folk-song and miracle play still persists in each class. And with liberty and leisure the mass of the workers will not only choose the kind of art that delights them, but will also themselves once more, as in primitive times, speak forth their own tastes, their own conceptions of life and nature. So that, when we look sadly at the remaining fragments of popular craftsmanship, such as English wood-carving and Russian embroidery, we should remember for our consolation that, not decorative art alone, but expressive also, will some day be again the expression of the people's instinct as it was in the dawn of time.

It is only, after all, for a very few centuries of the past that art has been out of the hands of the people. As long as it served as the expression of need, and was a matter of prayer and ritual, it remained theirs, either through the drama of the religious services, both pagan and Christian, or in the corporate work of sculpture and architecture. Nor was the practice of oratory unknown to them, since the priests were often of the people, and political agitators were not unknown. John Ball with his "Who was then a gentleman?" was certainly not alone as a demagogue in the Middle Ages. Even in the recited literature of the time, though the jongleur might be better paid by the castle audience, he undoubtedly had often to put up with cottage comfort. So that Casey with his fiddle, as he plays and sings to his great northern audiences of working people, simply proves the continuous tradition of this form of art in England.

It was the rise, however, of the professional artist which finally consummated the divorce between art and the people. For he worked more willingly, of course, for people who not only could pay him well, but who had leisure to devote to him. The Industrial Revolution, with its enormous widening of the gulf between the Haves and the Have-nots, completed the process, till, for the worker, the art of painting means the picture post-card and the chromolithograph; drama means the cinema; music, rag-time and the song of the

Music Hall; sculpture is fretwork, and architecture speaks with strange tongue in the mean streets, even though these may cluster in the shadow of a cathedral.

These facts are the result of want of leisure, of want of money to pay for concert tickets and theatre seats, and especially of the bodily and nervous weariness that only responds to the stimulation of noise and crudity. Nor is this all: the ever-growing subtlety of technique in every form of art has made it more difficult as the years pass for the plain man to read this art language, although the very letters by which it is expressed were created by his own forebears. This divorce, then, between art and the worker is the result of an economic process, as its cure will again be due to another change in wealth production. To this extent the theory of the Marxist is undoubtedly correct. For with enormous labour-saving devices and with a world-wide wealth in the hands of the people, there will be leisure for art and ample means out of which the artist will be paid, not by individual patrons, but by the State.

But the results of the past are not to be evaded easily. For, although the popular instincts which gave birth to art are not dead, they have been restricted and debased. They will have a hard battle to rise again to the surface, and a still harder struggle to prove their supreme value as that which makes life noble, beautiful, and worth living. It is quite possible that for a long time the new

social state will be so hideous, to anyone but the pure humanist who can find pleasure in merely healthy people, that men will actually come to believe that art is dead and that its resurrection is a miracle which no faith can hope to see. For it is impossible to believe that the immediate descendants of the present workers of Europe will ever learn to enjoy the elaborate and formalised technique which is the feature of classic art to-day, or that they will ever feel it to be, in any way, expressive of their own emotions, their own instincts and passions. For very few, if any, of the classic forms in painting, music, sculpture, architecture, or drama, are either universal enough in their appeal, or social enough in their method of expression to reach the heart of the worker. It is impossible in this connection not to remember the fact that, although Tolstoi is not accepted by everyone as genuinely expressive of the Russian peasant and still less of the proletarian class, he yet does contrive to catch the ear of the millions. And his evidence is plain on this head: to him the shibboleths of classic art are idiotic, and the themes of it effeminate foolishness. One can scarcely avoid the conclusion that, in this matter at least, this Russian thinker actually does express the instincts of the working man.

Art, then, if it is to emerge after the great economic change, must alter its values entirely by simplifying its technique and purifying its appeal. It must learn to speak once more to simple men,

to simple and sincere men who have no taste for the merely subtle and prefer wholesome foods to merely choice ones. The business of art is to deliver a message to the soul of man; it demands creative imagination and technical skill, but both of these must be adapted to the character of the soul to whom the message has to be delivered.

And if we look back at the position of the arts of painting and music before the war we find this extraordinary fact that, long before change was actually upon us in the political world, it was present in the sphere of art. A world change was at the door, though no one recognised it directly: it was the artists alone who felt the coming storm, as trees in a valley that shiver in their upper branches although the depths are still. As far back as the sixties the painters were doing what was going to be done a few years later by civilisation—they were throwing away the baggage. They were trying to look once more at the world with the eyes of the primitive man, trying to view both sea and earth as the first fishers and peasants had done. In other words, they were getting ready, though they did not know it, for the revolution, getting ready to express the heart of the new age, as the classic painters expressed the instincts of the old social structure. For as under the direction of the aristocrat and the bourgeoisie art had been growing ever farther away from its primitive inspiration, it had ceased to possess the power to move simple people.

And long before these simple people were even near their power, the artist, on his side, was learning to realise that he, too, was choked by convention, that if he was ever to be able to say what he wanted to say, it must be by his own methods and not with those invented by artists who had quite a different message to deliver. He must, if he were not to be buried under tradition, get back to the state of mind of the child or the primitive. And exactly what he would have to express in the future he did not know. He only realised that whatever it was to be, he must at any rate get ready to say it. So Cézanne, Matisse, Picasso, Gauguin, and Van Gogh went back to the dawn of things. Like children in those first drawings which are nowadays such a revelation of child, and therefore of human nature, they sat down to draw lines round their conception of things, not to imitate nature or to make a "real" picture. In short they put themselves in the mood in which the Bushman scratched lines to indicate swiftness, that is, what he saw in a reindeer. What they were doing was to dig deep to the seed of life in art. Just as we are all, in one sense, not men and women so much as sheaths that carry on the seed of the generations to come, so a painting or a piece of music is a body carrying life. And the life being the point of all the process, when you want to say "swiftness" you must not concentrate on the flesh and



bones of the reindeer but on that quick movement which is the life—to you. But as the ages passed it was on flesh and bones, not life, that art had become concentrated. Now, with these Post-Impressionists the life was to be the be-all and the end-all of their work.

Were they not, then, getting ready on their part for the life that was to come on to the world-stage after economic change had done its work?

Since 1914 political and economic forces have been at work preparing a future in which the new impulse in art, which began long before, will find its scope. For in one sense it is true that all wealth production, all political construction, exists in order that man may have means of living in the world of his own creative activity. The factory hums, in fact, in the last resort, not that man may be clothed, but that he may dream. It is only when one connects the course of art with the history of economics that one catches glimpses of the design on which evolution is working in human history.

Each one of the revolutionaries in painting makes his appeal to a simple sense of reality which any worker, if he could be made child-like and oblivious of the chromolithograph, would feel. Here, for instance, is a plate of apples painted by Cézanne. In it one has no delicate rendering of the tones of a still-life study as seen in some Flemish picture where the lights

and shades are all, and the apples nothing. No, one has an apple that strikes one in the eye, that speaks violently of the tremendous forces which Nature put forth to produce this common thing that has the joy of the earth in it. Here is a piece of matter, a marvellous thing as matter, the very thing with which the worker wrestles day after day with an "I will not let thee go unless thou bless me." And Cézanne gloats, too, over mere pigment like an old peasant sampling the qualities of a handful of soil. Pigment is soil and the mother stuff of life. We are a long way from drawing-rooms now.

Look again at Matisse's dancing figures in red against a crude background. Motion is here the subject, and these figures have the zest and strength of jumping animals or of lusting men. A few curves that leap like a child's drawing and you see before you movement as it was when it began to be an expression of life. These Danseuses are such shapes as prehistoric man might have conceived whilst he still carried with him an ancestral memory of the moving creatures in the primitive ocean.

Gauguin finds nothing simple enough in colour and line outside Tahiti, and there he works although he took "nothing but his eyes with him." His was the savage instinct of design, derived congenitally perhaps from a Peruvian Creole mother. Conserving this as his most

precious inheritance, he built up his men and women out of the primitive animalism of the dark-skinned people, just as long ago the Greeks conceived Olympians from the restrained simplicity of the Caucasian race. So we get him drawing a line, like a child, around his conception of an Eve, and an Adam, who are warmed by hotter blood than anything Dionysus himself could create.

But it is Van Gogh who, learning to draw from the miners in a Belgian colliery town, brings this simplicity of barbarism into the life of the modern worker, and then Flemish sculpture gets to work on the men who have sweated the fat from their bones in an iron foundry. And these artists are, one and all, seeking the life itself in the thing presented. They are taking all life for their province and not some part of it that is fenced away from the rest. So that the "Old Harlot" from the dustheap of civilisation is to Rodin as fine a subject as a Tahitian Venus to Van Gogh, or for the matter of that, the Madonna and Child to Raphael. These forerunners of the future are simply getting ready to speak in a language that will be understood by those whose primary business is to live.

This does not, of course, mean that if you were to take a company of artisans or of country people into a Post-Impressionist exhibition they would behave differently from the average crowd of

middle-class people who sneer and laugh before such pictures. For the workers are slimed over with the sentimentality of the current conception of popular art. The only crumb of fancy they have been allowed to get from the rich man's table is the taste that loves pictures of ladies being courted in gardens, or plays in costume drama, and "Annie Laurie" in song. They have lost the child's outlook to get the lady's instead. But only get one of them to stand quietly in front of the drawing by Picasso called "Poverty" and the worker will understand. He knows what strain can do and the underfeeding that has lasted a lifetime. He has spoken about it and "taken off his coat to it" at the street corner. And here it is on the wall in front of him. It lives in a face. Show them "Le Peuple le pleure": there is man and woman and the clinging together of two tired people through the years, with the dragging child and the clothes sticking to the legs with clay. "It speaks," they say. Before Matisse's dancers they will laugh, first because they find the things grotesque, and then because—they move. For these dancers are "speaking" too.

It has been said of Vincent Van Gogh that "the planes of his canvases, which seem to have been produced, not by brushes, but by the stonemason's implements, scream, and we are sometimes tempted to scream in unison, just as we feel inclined during a storm to shout aloud with the thunder."

It is the world of modern labour whose life has

now to be expressed, and not serenity, nor order. Not even existence lapped away from jar and turmoil. And how else could this world be painted except by planes produced by "stonemason's implements" that scream, and that make us want to scream as do the whirring engines, the roaring trains and thundering tractors?

Thus, when we see war as painted by Mr. Nevinson we see what Post-Impressionism was created to paint. In these pictures what we have before us is the *reductio ad absurdum* of the machine age. Here the engines of destruction which man has made are not shown as destroying him, for that would be to treat him as the reasonable being he is not. No, here is the machine riding over man's will, making him subservient, a crawling slave to iron and steel. It is the tyranny of war: it is militarism as a system that Mr. Nevinson sees as the life of this nightmare of existence. Man has brought forth a monster in the tyranny of military rule, but his Frankenstein, though it sometimes tears his brain and bowels out, does something much worse: it makes him cease to be a man at all. His flesh still quivering, his nerves still sensitive, are linked in devil's wedlock to the thing, matter, that ought to have been kept chained by human intelligence. This is what the picture "La Mitrailleuse" writes down, once and for all, for all ages to come. And the things of the wind painted here, the blue and silver shapes, swift as panthers and more deadly,

which are aeroplanes, show no man at all in the sky. There is no human pity in the brain that drew "The Army on the March" or the "Soldiers Resting": though there are men in the scene, they are now just lines and planes. The satire is so enormous that one cannot feel in the artist any intention of being satirical. No: he put down what he saw as the life in war: he drew, like a child, a line round his conceptions of war. Because long ago man the sage and man the lover of his brother turned aside from the pursuit of wisdom and the practice of brotherliness to create this monstrous abortion both sage and lover have lost every shred of humanity except their capacity for enduring fatigue and pain.

These pictures are a more utter, because a more intellectual, condemnation of war than Verestchagin's canvases covered with the dead and the dying. Before these latter one feels pity for the folly which goes on believing in the usefulness of war: before "La Mitrailleuse" one would be glad to think that the men in blue among the wires were actually going to lose the only quality which still makes them human, and that is their power for suffering.

It is probable that one of the most powerful forms of art in the democracy of the future will be black and white. It is direct in its methods and can, by mechanical reproduction, be made to reach everyone. And, in fact, in the form of caricature and of allegory it has already shown its

power to speak to simple people. Dürer from his homely old fellow-citizens reaches out to the simple heart of all human life. The German mother, worn by the pangs of childbirth, is the object presented to the eye, but in her ugliness and in the humiliation of the child's first needs, we see, by illusion, a world which not only travails but knows that uncleanness of birth which was so accentuated by the Jewish law-giver. Out of the treasure of his simple heart this great genius arrives at last at an expression of the essential sadness of humanity's music. Melancholy and Fear are the figures that haunt these old German homes because they lurk, for all our laughter and love of comfort, in the depths of the heart. Dürer is simplicity itself, since, for all his detail, he is concerned with what he wants to say, he is putting again a line round his conceptions. And his conceptions are, after all, very much like those of the ploughman. He would have illustrated Burns as no one else could have done.

The old German saw destiny enthroned where another great black-and-white artist of to-day, Will Dyson of the Labour Press, sees man, a fat man, the swelling curves of whose body are fed by the blood of sweated men and women. Moloch is the life of Will Dyson's conception: he scratches him down with the fiendish zest of a street arab showing something he has conceived that is obscene. It is not propaganda, because, where the propagandist attacks Messrs So and

So, Dyson is at the throat of cupidity, of all those who have gorged themselves on human victims from giant Fee-Foh-Fum downwards. There may be many Dysons for some time to come until, one supposes, their wrath will be lost in the flowing stream of human brotherhood which will ultimately submerge the fat man and all his tribe.

Part of the stock-in-trade of those who prophesy the failure of socialised democracy is the statement that when the work is done co-operatively and not competitively, the idler will instantly spread himself everywhere like a black army. The people who talk so ignore the fact that we already possess a black army and that Aubrey Beardsley was the artist who showed what they were like. But because the tool of Beardsley's irony is a mere arabesque, that is, because he is so decorative in line, people forget that he was also one of the great expressive artists. If ever a man wrote down concepts of the "life" of his subjects it was Beardsley. Look at the profiles in his *Salome* pictures or in the "Wagnerites": each one is a feature in a design and at the same time a jungle type as these types occur in the human beast. Nature, having been driven out by the pitchfork of artificiality, comes back into the physiognomy as a line of bone, and Beardsley, the imp, sees it. These clubmen, loungers and pretty ladies are satyrs sprung from what the old monks called



Luxury. Hogarth's gluttons and lechers are amiable bargesses compared with the Beardsley figures. One can imagine in the future some great Judgment Hall of the Democracy illustrated by his black-and-white work into which all idlers, slackers, and finicking fools would be led, there to meditate on the results of idling, slack-ing, and finicking. Probably, of course, the artist meant no such comment on rich Society. For, although he loved a jest, he loved a design still better. Yet that bed with himself in it that he drew for *The Yellow Book* became a bed of justice indeed, though it may be hard to decide whether the imp, the satirist, or the artist, was uppermost in the creator's soul. Certainly Beardsley held no flail in his hand as Dyson does whose very drapery of poverty and starvation falls in folds that suggest a scourge of ropes, or more often of serpents. The two artists are the complements of each other, and the designs of both would not be out of keeping on the pages of the recording angel. And those are the pages which the Third Estate loves, in its present mood, especially to ponder. There will be a great deal of work in the future for those who can draw for the recording angel.

As there will be for the orator. Indeed, as the people become more and more conscious of their underlying unity so will oratory rise to the position it once held in art. The work of the machine age has been to produce great numbers

of little people who cannot possibly form the wings which a speaker needs if his speech is to rise into art. The Greeks, for instance, were great in oratory, not only because they could call together audiences of great people, but also because they spoke to people who were accustomed, through the Chorus of the Drama, to respond in spirit to the stimulus of words and images. Thus audience and speaker could together soar out of the limitations of personal existence.

This is only possible nowadays on rare occasions, because the prevailing tone of this time, when speech is in question, is that of protest against everything that is. And when did invective, criticism, and a rasping sense of exasperation supply anybody with wings? Nearly every speaker to-day, who in another and happier time might be an artist, is just a swimmer in the trough of a wave and happy if he can keep himself afloat. Yet Music can still give freedom, and "When wilt thou save the people?" sung in unison possesses the gift of liberation even in this time.

The root of conscious art is, of course, liberation for the people, and has much in common with intoxication. For Dionysus of the Vine is born of fire and dew till he becomes the spirit of life itself. At first all expression of this liberation is communal in its working out, however individual its inception may have been. And the way all

art has to travel is back to the communal expression of life once more. Thus in architecture, in carving and painting, large numbers of people working together produced the final effect, as in the primitive drama the musicians, the dancers and the actors combined together to express a common intoxication, a common liberation. Early art is as communal, in fact, as early agriculture, and the more closely we look at the practical and the ideal in history the more clearly we shall see how one is reflected in the other. In this sense Morris was more of a prophet than any other Socialist, and we may be quite sure that, as daily life grows more co-ordinate, so actors, painters, sculptors and musicians will draw closer to one another to give expression to the sense of life held in common as well as of souls liberated by the same impulse. In this sense Wagnerian opera was a prophecy, though, overloaded with tradition and symbol as it is, the art of Bayreuth will have to change very much before it can fall into line with the future of Democracy.

One art only there is that still holds the people and has, indeed, never lost its grip on them. And that is music. In the future it will be, almost certainly, the master art of the democratic world, because it possesses the power of expressing fellowship above all other arts. It has always been used to express racial feeling and brotherhood. As it is the emotional language of the future, so it is the earliest language. For its

origin we must go back to the dawn, before ritual was invented, when religion was still magic and every object of nature had its voice. Nature, then, spoke by music, as well as daily life and the occupations of it. There were songs of the weavers, of the dyers, of the grinders. And chanting in unison expressed the race sense, just as intoning in "the true voice" was supposed to reach the unseen world of the dead. Music above all—and that makes it the great art of the future—expresses the group sense: the plain-song goes with the corporate spirit of the Gothic building and the responsorial singing of Church music is a rendering of the passion of "All people that on earth do dwell," in echo and counter-echo. And that, if the signs promise truly, is the very farthest horizon that as yet the eye of man can see.

In early times, before the separation of personality was completed, when the individual man scarcely realised himself as distinct from his family and tribe, it was music which linked him in feeling with his fellow. And even now in the deep subconscious regions where men are still one, however they may protest their separateness, it is music that expresses this common body of emotion. A Highland troop playing the pipes down Whitehall says the same thing now as it did when London bricks had never been baked or thought of; the tribal note of that music is as primitive as any tom-tom beating in an African village.

During the period of the great exile, when the

human race has been learning to be conscious of the separation of human unit from human unit, music, too, has been learning to speak in many voices corresponding to the separate tones in which individuality expresses itself. But as the race returns once more to the brotherhood whence it emerged, so will music also find a means by which men may express their unity in difference. This is the tradition of orchestra. And just as all that is inexpressible in words between the life of Europe and the life of Asia finds expression in the two modes of music, the Dorian and the Lydian, so the separateness of to-day is shown in to-day's music, and the union of to-morrow will, we may be sure, be echoed by to-morrow's music.

And music, too, is getting ready for the time of change: here in Debussy is the breaking down of forms; in Wagner there is an echo of the Dionysiac festivals with their blending of music, dance, acting and spectacle to produce underlying unity of feeling. We have some hint of the unique place which is waiting for this art in the strange fact that the human sense of hearing has been growing progressively more subtle and, as the centuries pass, is becoming capable of building richer harmonies. Thus the Greeks made the interval of the fifth the pivot of all their music, though in the primitive lyre there were few fifths used in the same octave, and the interval of the third does not appear, at least in written music, till the fourteenth century. And now, by certain

Polish and Russian composers, intervals are being used that are almost unintelligible to Western ears, or sound barbarous, as though something were trying to express itself that ought not to be expressed.

All that the great writers on music have tried to say of their art leaves on the mind one impression—that music alone is the language of brotherhood, of race kinship, and even of affection. Here is Schumann; "Love and friendship," he says, "pass their life on earth with veiled face and closed lips. No human being can convey to another how he loves him. . . ." There is only one art that belongs to a time earlier even than words and so can speak that which is deeper than words. A Glück representing struggle by three consecutive fifths, a Beethoven showing the distraction of passion by a chord of the ninth, or a Russian hearing intervals imperceptible to the Anglo-Saxon ear are, one and all, practising modes of expression for that perception of human unity in diversity after which we are all groping to-day. Bergson it is who puts the "Democracy" of music in its most perfect form. It is, he says, the carrying on of a total consciousness subconsciously. Towards that "total consciousness" economic and political, as well as spiritual changes, are working. And as these changes take place so musical forms are becoming richer against the day when they will be required by the people to express that which will otherwise go unexpressed

—their sense of difference and their sense of oneness. Nor have the masses ever really lost hold of this art. In colliery towns and in midland centres of industry it is still the one authentic voice of the people, as it was long ago when there were very few to use it.

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## Chapter VIII.—Science and Life

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THE fresh wind blowing across the doldrums of the meeting came with the co-operative delegate. His hair stood up aggressively, his voice boomed, and he struck the new note. It had been a dull affair, for every speaker, so far, had shown himself to be suffering from the peculiar mental disease of this time—a vague desire to make the world better combined with absolute ignorance of how this is to be done. And now came this man. "We don't want," said he, "education for industry, but for life. What we want is to be finer men, not better labourers. We refuse to be sacrificed any longer to output."

People looked at one another with a glint in the eyes. They saw, what had been before unseen, that so far all the speakers had been throwing the children, the men of to-morrow, to the Moloch of the machine. Train and train, they had been saying, for trade after the war, to pile up output, to continue the course of action which has ended in making men, not only cogs in the machinery of production, but of destruction. For already we are regarding the children, not as children, but as Assets of Empire. For proof of



this look at the bookstalls, not the Prussian, but the English ones; look, too, at a Children of the Empire exhibition.

The co-operative delegate touched the great question of the future as respects science: is man to put all things under his feet, including the machine he has made? He has, in part, subjugated matter and tamed the elements, but he is still the serf of loom and foundry: he is still a slave in the hands of the military machine which devours his children wholesale. So far—and this war proves it—inventive science has been man's curse, and it is poor consolation to a man who has escaped death by gas or shrapnel to find the power which mutilated him actually condescending to electrify his maimed nerve or put a germ in him to fight the poisons in his veins. The thing is such preposterous folly that the worker feels himself justified in his distrust of science. In the main it has done him wrong, though it has called him to birth in such multitudes.

This power of the machine takes two forms:—on the one hand, it is social organisation, and, on the other, the steel and power monsters by which production exists. And both must be made to serve the humanity that created them. For to the thoughtful among the industrial classes it is becoming plain that it is the same science which increased output and speeded up methods to his detriment that is being used as the means of destroying him for the benefit of Imperial claims

founded on wealth and domination. It is, in short, science that robs him in peace times and kills and mutilates him in war. At present he is not yet aware that he is also being impoverished. This remains a discovery kept over, like a last gift to a good child, till the years of peace; perhaps in another decade of "hungry forties."

It is evident from this line of argument how socialists are made. What is not so clear is the position of science.

Of the three instincts from which science, or ordered knowledge, springs—namely, curiosity or the desire to find out what is hidden; love of comfort; and love of dominating matter—it is the second, mainly, which has ruled the physical science of the West. Only the rare man has been possessed, in this part of the world, by the high desire to press back the kingdom of darkness that surrounds the lighted patch of consciousness where man finds himself. And only the man of the East is dominated by the instinct of the master whom the forces of nature obey because in him they find one who knows the laws of their being. The physical science of the West, which began when a man tried to sail a boat or a woman to use plant-fibres for cloth-weaving, has continued always on the same lines: that is, it has been governed by the desire to forward practical work. Thus the inventors of many of the mechanical improvements in machinery were men who all day handled machines. But they were

robbed of the fruits of their insight, not only personally, but as a class. And this fact has crippled inventive science down to this day. While the chemist and the biologist have opened up new creative powers that might be used in industry and agriculture, the application of these has been retarded by the reluctance of the worker to employ his technical ingenuity in forwarding processes which may only mean that he will have to speed-up his nerves still more in the race to keep pace with tireless machinery, and will certainly dig deeper the gulf between himself and the class that exploits the machine he himself serves. And as the worker becomes more class-conscious this reluctance grows apace, till the inventor of a quicker method of production may well seem a traitor to his class.

Looking at the matter in this light we see why production by owner-producers will mean increase of production. For, first, the worker will know how to shorten hours and overcome the evils of "speeding-up," and second, he will feel that every invention will mean more life for himself and his class. No longer will the effort of his brain degrade his own class still more for the benefit of another. And no benevolent encouragement of the genius of employees can possibly rival this royal way of power over a man's own brain-work wielded by the man himself. And with every uplift into a wider circle of interests, with leisure to think

and opportunity by travel of learning how other men do things, there must come a further accession in invention and in all that feeds mental alertness. More than this, with a real opening of careers there will at last come to an end that deplorable system of forcing a man into the occupation which is handiest, but which he would never choose if he had any freedom at all.

A Continental writer classifies the two nations of the Haves and the Have-nots as those who serve the State and those who are free of it. But this is cross-classification and quite useless, since the forces of labour, or Have-nots, belong to both categories, railwaymen and miners being at present in State employ and the textile and pottery industries as free of State control as may be under conscription. The worker's own principle of difference is that between those who serve the machine and those who are free of it, either because they are exploiting machinery for their own benefit, or because they get their living without direct reference to it, as professionals do. By an extension of the term "machine labour" to cover all employment of men except for the worker's individual benefit, we have a final expression of what to the industrial thinker is tyranny. By this extension the State is condemned by the worker whenever it uses men for its own purposes, and militarism is regarded as the last and worst exploiting of

men. Finally, all employment of machinery for the benefit of any class except the one which is actually working it is to him unjust, since value should go to the men who created it. So that industrial freedom will not be obtained till all men are freed from State tyranny, from militarism and industrial exploitation. And until these changes are accomplished industrial unrest will continue.

Nor is this a mere matter, as the bourgeoisie imagine, of ease and comfort. It is far more one of mental attitude. Take as an instance to show this the men's attitude towards that strange phenomenon, the welfare worker, who is employed now by large firms, ostensibly to soften the lot of the woman worker. By the men she is almost always regarded as an impertinence and undoubtedly her male equivalent, were such a being to come into existence, would have a rough time of it. Since she is in the pay of the firm, she is of course obliged to please the directors of it, and tacitly to encourage a system of espionage which, perhaps quite unconsciously, leads to the retention of the more subservient characters. But she is more: she is an expression of the spirit of patronage, which is only endured at present by the girls themselves because women have unfortunately acquired the habit of being dependent on some one, even if that some one is a man to whom they are daily making a present of a considerable portion of

their own strength. As it is, many women are beginning to ask why, if this is a question of order, they are not allowed to choose a prefect, or monitor from their own mates. When the women's Trade Unions get to work the welfare woman will probably have to look out for another job. At present she is only one more recruit for the army of petty officials who are everywhere earning their living by interfering with other people's work.

The new world towards which the worker's thoughts are turning is no mere paradise of high wages and short hours. That first, but only as a means to a fuller life. And materially, of course, the agent of this must be science. For no one knows better than a skilled engineer or operative what machinery could do to humanise, ease, and beautify material existence if it were used for that purpose and not merely to heap up profits for a small class. And if challenged with the question, "But why now? Why the change at this moment?" their answer is one that indeed "speaks." For they say, "If life be the price of life, good Lord, we have paid it in."

But they demand to be paid in terms of life, not of more death.

With what actual schemes of reconstruction is the mind of the worker now busied? His fancies are very concrete: he wants a town that will be heated and lighted by electric supply worked by

water power from central stations, thus ending at a stroke the drudgery of the women in back kitchens and feeding the factories that cluster outside the town. To these quick means of transit will be supplied by the same power. Beyond the factories will be a girdle of farms, so that town and country may enter into a new partnership. He expects great shortening of the hours of labour, ultimately down to at least a four hours' day. For the only slave shall be the machine itself, and that shall work, if we will, twenty-four hours out of the twenty-four, being, of course, served by short shifts. And this solves the problem of industrial slavery and of unemployment.

This is the basis of the workers' scheme of town reconstruction. It may come without struggle—that depends on goodwill—or with it. But come it must. For the worker who has often what the middle-class has not, a practical knowledge of what applied science can do, knows well that we are on the eve of another leap forward in industry that will be comparable only to the advance made in the first half of the nineteenth century. We shall soon be turning from railway to airway, thus settling the difficulty of quick distribution, and by applying atomic energy to agriculture we shall produce on a scale that baffles all measurements of to-day. But the industrial worker is not minded to see the greater part of these blessings pass him by while he enters into a prison-house of immensely increased and "scientised" toil. He has learnt in

France and Flanders what the destructive machine can do with men; he has been learning slowly, so that the knowledge has eaten into his consciousness, what the machinery of production has done for him and his children. At first contact with the working man I could not understand his ingrained distrust for the employer as a class. So deep is this sometimes that it can only be compared with another instinctive horror, that of the woman for the snake. But when I read industrial history, I understood. There I saw the whole story of how the worker has been sacrificed to the machine. I read of the anti-combination laws which made him a felon, of the wages, assessed by magistrates, that threw him on the charity of the Poor Law. To the leisured class this is, of course, but a story of long ago. We no longer cart workhouse children to the doors of the factories, we have Labour Magistrates now and the Triple Alliance of Labour as a sky sign in the heavens. Neither does the worker keep actual count of this old story, yet the memory of it lives in his blood like a germ that, half quiescent as it is, yet springs to life every time a mistake is made in dealing with him. "The lion lie down with the lamb," says he, "surely this thing cannot be?" when they present him with a scheme of co-direction on the part of employers and employed.

And always present are his "conditions": the slums reported on by the commission, his million cripple children that are the fruit of their parents'



poverty, his cramped environment so that for the average worker a journey to a foreign country is as impossible as—the passage of a rich man through the needle's eye.

The fact that the work of Western science has been mainly conditioned by practical claims has, of course, tended to keep it chiefly to the plane of physics so that, even when it has branched into psychological enquiry, that branch of study has been valued chiefly for its curative effect, and the so-called psychical knowledge is usually merely psycho-therapeutical. That this tendency will be accentuated by the Social Revolution is probable since that event brings to power the two classes, the women and the workers, who are least speculative and most given over to the art of living. This is as it should be, because life has been so maimed and spoilt by bad management that we are in the main an ugly, diseased and stupid people. Every generation that comes to birth contains splendid promise—only to be ruined by the prejudice and ignorance of the older people. If the new masters of life can set science to work on medicine for the prevention of disease, on eugenics, on economics for the true distribution of wealth, as well as on psychics for the work of suggestion in mental disease, they will only be doing what might have been done at least a century ago. Abstract science will probably attract few workers, and those will be, as in the past, men who are ready to let the prizes of

success be taken by others. Certainly it will be a long time before they can hope to find themselves in the main stream, whatever may be their part in the far distant future among the people who are born from those higher levels of health and sanity which humanity may hope to reach under the new régime.

Meanwhile there is one curious feature of working-class freedom from prejudice which is very significant, and that is their interest in the cult called spiritualism, or as some would put it, their proneness to superstition. It is true that in the spiritualistic practices of the working-class we have a reversion to exceedingly primitive beliefs which are not so very different from those of the African or the man of the East with his reverence for ancestors. But this by no means destroys the interest of the fact itself. For what has held the world back more than anything else in the history of the mind has been the dogmatic attitude of orthodox science, combined with the "thus far and no farther" of the religious teacher. Both of these have refused to make further enquiries into the potentialities of the human being, because the one assumed that these could only be studied along a certain line, and the other regarded it as impious to ask any questions at all. As the worker becomes a more independent thinker he will, almost certainly, refuse to acquiesce in either attitude of mind. And the fact that this

“psychical science” will take the severely practical form of enquiring what a man can do with his unknown powers, will be no bar to greater knowledge. Rather the contrary, in fact, since to try to show by practical experiment whether I can travel abroad in some other form than my physical body, or can get messages from other people by means that require no telegraphic apparatus, is the surest and most convincing way of getting proof—if any can be got. And if not, if these beliefs are delusions, then science will be the richer by a whole department of psychological research in the law of delusions. It is, at any rate, not at all contrary to the worker’s instinct to approach psychic matters with an open mind. It is true that he is credulous and only too ready to build up a whole theory of “faith” on very little evidence. But this simply means that he is ill-educated in two directions, for he has not learnt to think straight and has been constantly fobbed off by his religious teachers with stories of mysterious events that are either being repeated to-day or which never took place at all. With a better training he will bring to bear on this question that open-mindedness which both orthodox science and orthodox religion have refused to employ. His “Let’s enquire, let’s try” is worth a good deal wherever simplicity of outlook is the quality required.

But it is with “Let’s enquire, let’s try” that

every advance in ordered knowledge has been made. And if the working man can continue to use that spirit there need be no fear of real retrogression in scientific research. Rather indeed, if internationalism brings the Eastern and Western types of mind together, we may expect a growing mastery in both mental and physical science. In fact, in several departments it seems as though such inter-working of both lines of enquiry is essential, if further progress is to be made. And international science, in the sense of science that works together to a common end, is surely one of the "new things" which promises to yield an amazing harvest.

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## Chapter XX.—Literature and Democracy

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ON a certain Monday in Whit-week the staircase of the Musée de Picardie at Amiens was crowded with peasants standing at gaze before the painting by Puvis de Chavannes called the "Ludus Pro Patria." There in front of them, meandering through a vast tableland of woods and fields, flowed a slow, tree-mirroring river of Picardy. On the banks of it were the folks at holiday, the young men throwing darts, the women preparing the feast. Not far away, in the picture "Ave Picardie Nutrix," was net-weaving and apple-gathering; spinning and sheep-herding; the building of a bridge and the crushing of the grain; women bathing and a woman nursing her child: an allegory, not only of the pleasant poplar-land but of toil and rest, sowing and harvesting, age and death, a shadow-picture of the passing of the gods of the earth.

But the subjects of the paintings, those whose toil had been the inspiration of them, stood in absolute silence, expressing neither surprise nor wonder. Quietly they stood and quietly they went away. And what they thought nobody knew but themselves. Probably they had no

distinct thought at all, but a vague sense of familiarity tempered by unreality. For what the peasants saw in front of them was the spirit of beauty distilled from toil. But toil produces warped muscles, stunted frames, pallid or heavy bodies, slow-moving minds. And these facts they vaguely knew, though they could not follow the mystic change by which the familiar processes of labour had been transmuted. They were, in fact, looking at one of the latest expressions of that older world of art which lived to distil beauty from the present and to suggest it from the past. They were not only facing a sublimation of actual sowing and harvesting, building and fishing, but all the glamour that dreamers in the past, from Theocritus downwards, have thrown over the primitive task of earth-culture. And to the peasants this trailing glory of romance was simply non-existent. They were not afraid, for they were blind, though possibly rather puzzled.

Yet these peasants were French and therefore of a country where artists are understood, and not merely, as in England, regarded as amiable idiots who must, like meat, "be humoured, not druv," but should on no account be taken seriously. Art is in France very nearly as serious as *l'amour*. The difficulty between Puvis de Chavannes and the peasants was caused by the painter's appeal to tradition. What echoes in the mind of a cultivated man would not be aroused

by the grouping and sentiment of these beautiful dream-like figures? Here is suggested, to the imagination with a background, the loveliness of Sicilian pastoral literature, of Vergilian Georgics, of the Homeric plough and the bees of Hymettus, all seen through the medium of great minds. The light in these canvases is not the same that scorches the harvester, the vine-tender, or the tobacco-gatherer in the fields of France: it is the sunlight of a faery world that age after age has been growing richer and more beautiful from the inspiration of the generations, till it trails clouds of suggestion that live only in the mind of the spectator. But to those shut out from the past it is naturally strange and even grotesque.

It is this dependence on tradition that has made literature the last of the arts to reach the mass of the people. Consider, for instance, what Dante could possibly mean to a man who knew nothing whatever of that Greek and Roman world which made up the background of the great Florentine's mind. Even Chaucer with all his humour—and the saving directness of humour is one of the greatest powers possessed by Literature over the mind of Everyman—even Chaucer loses two-thirds of his zest to a reader who knows nothing of mediæval England, or of the soil of the Decamerone by which the roots of his imagination were fed. Literature, and especially the literature of the past, is largely an affair of echoes.

Though Shakespeare is popular when his plays are acted, to sit down and read him with a full measure of joy one must know something of Renaissance Europe and still more of Elizabethan England.

It is true, however, that ever since Victorian times literature has been tending more and more to freedom from tradition and is therefore coming closer to the minds of the people. At the same time, although a modern writer is not so directly dependent on literary tradition as the classic and Renaissance authors, yet to appreciate him fully requires a certain elasticity of mind that can only be obtained by familiarity with at least one other sphere of life besides one's own. For without that practice one cannot take pleasure in imaginative creation: one cannot live in some other air than the one habitually breathed. To enjoy Thackeray or even Dickens, the background of Victorian London must be conceivable to the mind that is to enjoy: to care for Meredith, one must be practised in a picturesque way of expression that works by allusion and demands alertness of intelligence. Even Hardy loses half his power, peasant writer as he is, unless one can see the drama of Wessex against the background of destiny which Hardy derived from Schopenhauer, and Schopenhauer from Greece. For, just as no one realises the riches of his own tongue till he can compare it with another, so only by the comparison of difference does the natural power



of a literature show up to its full extent. Nor is this all, for imagination has to be stimulated like every other power. It is roused only in one way as regards literature, and that is by the re-creation of an unfamiliar life. But when this miracle of re-creation has been once worked, facility is gained. Let anyone live in one strange "slice of life" and he has thereby gained the power of living in many.

From this imaginative power the mass of present-day workers are shut out. They have no leisure for it, even if in childhood they possessed, as almost all children do, the gift of "making up" stories. So far popular education has given but little opportunity for the exercise of this gift; and of all the great streams of living fancy which since Homeric days have flowed across Europe the working-classes have never drunk. Neither Greek, Roman, romance, mediæval, or modern literature has the slightest meaning for them, so meagre has their education been. They have no background at all to their minds. It is also true to say of the English worker that never, except at one period of his history, has he lived in the spirit of a foreign people. The one exception is that Puritan time when "England was the land of one book"—and that the Bible—and when serious men of all ranks dwelt imaginatively, and with strange results, on the ideals of the Jews. And yet, when the Belgian refugees came here, one of the first things they noticed as strange was the

number of books to be seen in every Englishman's home.

In the main there have been four aspects of life on which the literature of the past has in Europe chosen to concentrate. These are war and religion, love and nature. The producers of this literature have brought these four subjects forward so persistently that they make up almost the entire atmosphere in which people, whether they read or not, live and breathe. In European thought you cannot escape for long from either religious conceptions and national and warlike passions or from a love for natural beauty, and never, one is almost tempted to say, from sex. Since the Renaissance this last subject has held the field, whereas war and religion were in the forefront before that period. Yet there was in Greek literature the love of friends, as in the Eastern schools there is the affection between brother and sister, between parent and child. This preoccupation with sex is probably connected partly with the warlike tendencies of Europe, and that not in the sense that Venus and Mars are naturally akin, but simply because for a race to war successfully it must be prolific. And whenever sex becomes decadent in literature and correspondingly fruitless in bearing life, the appeal to the child-producing instinct is made in some other way. Thus, at the present time, cinema pictures promoted by government are actually produced to show how miserable a

childless old age can be, while baby welfare becomes a national business, and parenthood is encouraged by every possible means in military areas by canteen dances and other stimulating means. Bishops join the propaganda movement and chemists cheat the public—under government orders—by providing preventives which must be packed, in each case, with a certain proportion of ineffective shams. All this is done because literature is, for the time being, not as effective as it should be in making up for the wastage of war.

At this point a curious speculation presents itself, and it is this: how far does literature actually create mental atmosphere and how far is a literary note created by the already existing atmosphere in a period? Thus the Russian novelists show preoccupation with pain everywhere in their works: is that preoccupation a result of the national way of feeling, or are the novelists, by perpetually dwelling on this subject, bringing it out into the forefront of Russian consciousness and actually creating it, therefore, as a characteristic of the Russian nature? Undoubtedly the thing works both ways. Certain qualities are strong in the European people: they are amative, lovers of children, lovers of fighting; they are interested in creeds, or they were, though dense as to spiritual issues where these are at all subtle; they thrive in country life and love its activities. And all these things are reflected by their literary

artists, are accentuated by them, probably to the almost total suppression of other and more delicate tendencies.

For the one fact which is always true of the typical writer is that he loves to be in the thick of things, to live where life flows most tumultuously and to feel his pulses throb with the pulse of the world. And this is true of him more than of any other artist: he is no recluse, but of the world worldly.

When, then, in the Middle Ages the problem of poverty peeps out, as it does in *Piers Ploughman*, it is promptly shelved for other topics which are really interesting to the people of the time. So the poverty of the poor man, the one great dramatic interest of the worker's mind to-day, finds little or no place in literature down to the middle of the nineteenth century. The rich people, who were alone able to command artists, demanded from them themes far removed from the sordid, and this right up to the days when political economy was called the dismal science and before it had established itself, as it has done to-day, as the science which possesses more vivid human interest than all the others put together. War and chivalry were the artist's subjects; love and passion with all that these motifs stand for, from Aucassin and Nicolette in the daisy field down to Salome in the period of decadence; religion and nature interwoven into one strand by the struggle between the

paganism that accepted nature and the Christianity that thrust it out and used wine as the supreme symbol of sacrifice and renunciation.

But the time of the poor man was coming with the modern novel that started in the journalism of Defoe and gradually passed on to the burning topics of the day when capital was rising to power and labour struggling in its grip. With this literature we are drawing towards the time when the writer's art shall at last actually express the spirit of democracy. No poor man needs Homer or Dante, or even Chaucer and Piers Ploughman to understand *The Nether World* or *Oliver Twist*. Now, as always, the writer busies himself with the essential life of his own time. The most vivid topics of mediæval Italian life were love and religion, especially that which asks of death, "What do you hide?" Therefore Dante goes down into hell. And on the same principle, when life is busiest at the point where masses of human beings struggle for food, why, then the writer is busy with that struggle and those masses. And when life burns up to a white flame of reforming zeal, the artist makes a wry face and shows what goes on in mean streets and slums. He is only saved from propaganda by the fact that he is an artist and works, not by exhortation, but by emotion. Or—even more effectively—he gets him to the probe of satire and biting irony. Like the catfish, he becomes "the terror of the deep that makes things lively."

So at long last the proletarian and the writer meet: they are both "taking off their coats to it," the one by propaganda and the other by storytelling, and the great literary artist, who would be thrown away on smaller themes, gets his chance, not only of living in his own day, but of creating an art that is at last free of tradition and as native in its inspiration as any post-impressionist painting. When John Galsworthy writes *The Silver Box* his spirit is one with that of his own age, and he produces a piece of pure art that is even more intelligible to a working man than to a cultivated person who is loaded up with tradition. In this age literature, like every other form of art, must touch Mother Earth if it is to do what it has always done in the past and float on the main stream of existence. The temper and taste of the prevailing class has always been echoed in the taste of the literary artist, and this, not because he is a snob, but because he is always thrilling with the most vital human life of his time. Balzac loved money and so did bourgeois Paris: hence "La Comédie Humaine" stinks of money; the Paris of yesterday twirled a cynical moustache and Anatole France wraps his dressing-gown around him and pours out cynicism after cynicism. He is in tune with his age. Only once and again in the history of literature does a man wade straight upstream against the flow of it. And this Ibsen did when he told whither the enslavement of woman was leading the human intellect; this Tolstoi did when he

wrote down war as the one unpardonable sin against humanity and sex passion as its shadow. But these giants ultimately turned the stream of life in a direction already prepared for it. They were the dam-breakers for its imprisoned waters.

And now democracy, and literature along with it, is in full flood towards new values and new expressions of these. The situation is full of danger, for so far every civilisation has been built by men who possessed the width of feeling which comes from knowledge of life in many other national forms than their own and who knew that character is shaped differently according to climate and racial habits. Before Solon drew up laws for Greece he made a world tour, and the makers of the nations of modern Europe built the more generously because their minds were tinged with Roman order and Greek clarity of thought. The builders of to-morrow have behind them only a memory of struggle and of starvation. They might then erect a structure of society whose bleakness would form a strange contrast to the past civilisations with their splendid frontages and squalid slum quarters. The squalor would vanish under proletarianism, of course, but, for many minds, excellent sanitation would hardly compensate for the lost beauty of other forms of society. Even now, no doubt, in well-built Manchester there are many who regret even the filthy alleys of mediæval Florence.

But the thing is not so simple. For the first fact about this democracy is already presaged by those international congresses of the workers at which many tongues are spoken, and Kerensky kissing Henderson at a Labour Congress is an allegorical picture of the future. The Englishman's blush and the Russian's exuberance form a picture in miniature of the divergent tones of many different civilisations. For international democracy can build a richer and more varied structure than any founded on mere tradition. What you lose on the losses, in this matter, you make on the roundabouts, since every European atmosphere of to-day and yesterday will be actually represented in the brains of men as they sit at the Council Chamber for the government of the world's affairs. These may have no Greek to forget, but every one of them will have in his heart a living panorama of experience. And out of these united experiences, of these varied traditions there present in the flesh, will be built a new atmosphere for literature and life to get to work on.

Already certain working-class preferences in literature are apparent, and if these are not for the delicate artist, but rather for the "strong" writer of melodramatic tastes, one cannot be surprised. The very names of two authors who are much read by the workers, namely Jack London and Bart Kennedy, are as barking and challenging as *Tom Mann* itself, and if you read *Under the Iron Heel* and Kennedy's *Clogger*



Song you will get the proletarian fear and the proletarian revolt, the former of an organised and masterful combination to "down" him and the latter a fierce rage against all that servitude means. These books are far away from Tolstoi's peasant parables which express, not only all the morality, but all the shrewd common sense of the simple Russian mind. Many of these are probably actual peasant chronicles, neither invented nor even elaborated by the great Russian himself. For there is this strange fact to be noted that Russian literary artists, such as Gorki, do actually seem to be at home in the very heart of the proletariat, as well as of the moujik. There is some evidence, too, that such stories as *The Seven that were Hanged* actually not only depict the people but are appreciated by them. And this is practically never true in England, for when a book like Stephen Reynolds' *Poor Man's House* does actually show life from the poor man's standpoint it is only appreciated by the middle-class, except in the small section of working people who find themselves "put into the book." Even vivid pictures written by the workers themselves of the conditions under which they live, like Mr Williams' study of the Swindon Railway Works, are again only seized upon by those who want, from outside, to know what the worker feels.

There is only one power that can break down this indifference, and that is the Labour Press, or rather as it should be called, the Rebel Press.

Already the *Herald* and the *Labour Leader* and, to a lesser extent, *The Glasgow Forward* are not only giving, even in time of paper shortage, notices of works on the position of Labour in many lands, but also they are introducing to their pages many of the younger writers who are in tune with the life of labour. Insensibly, too, in the very remarkable articles on the present situation that appear in these papers the worker is becoming familiar with critical and political writing. And, most significant of all, the Reformers' Book-stall advertisements contain the names of one after another of the chief English and Continental writers. I have watched month by month the stream growing fuller of these straws that show the flow of tendency. At first, of literary artists there was but Edward Carpenter. It is very different now.

There are two turning-points to look forward to in this matter of the Labour Press, and those are, first, the appearance of the next English or French Labour daily, and, second, the production of the first international Labour journal. Without the latter all international movements will be crippled, and the starting of it will be, in many ways, almost as important as the calling of the first congress of the League of Peoples. Already in the *Labour Leader* a distinct feature is made of the people's progress in several countries in Europe, and out of that might grow the organisation of a weekly paper to appear in translation in

all the chief languages of Europe, with not only "news," but also a frank discussion of the position of political parties as these change from month to month. We should then be spared our present ignorance as to what the Cadet party is in Russia, or for what the Social Democrats of Germany actually stand. There would ultimately, of course, be editorial offices in Berlin, Petrograd, Paris, Vienna and London, a staff of translators in every capital city in Europe, and a central board of directors in close touch with all the international congresses at which the business of the world would be transacted. One could draw up, even now, a list of names of authors, publicists and politicians from many countries who would be invited to contribute to it. And under these circumstances, willy-nilly, the Labour man and woman would be forced to pass from a mere bowing acquaintance with literature to a close daily friendship with it. For it is by way of politics, and of reform generally, that the worker will become tinged with literary taste, and by internationalism that the authors of the future will learn to speak in the true accents of the people. And many stranger and more unlikely events than the establishment of a Labour organ for internationalism will happen within the next fifty years. Further, it will have to come into being, if this "tuning" of opinion by capitalism through the Press for its own purposes is to be fought on its

own ground. And unless that is done, and done powerfully, the new birth of freedom called internationalism will be deferred for many a long day. In many ways, the Press fight is the deadliest of all, as it is the most important.

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## Chapter X.—The Inheritors

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EVERY English political group, however small it may be, seems to possess the typical Englishman whose characteristic sentence is, "I rise to a point of order, Mr Chairman." He expresses the Anglo-Saxon ideal of social life which may be described as that of order amongst equals. That is the English reading of democracy and an excellent one, too. Yet at all times the Anglo-Saxon has only observed the principle within narrow limits circumscribed by class, race, and sex. Therefore the same man, who, among his social fellows, knows how to employ and expect equality of treatment, will often adopt either a hectoring or a patronising tone towards the "lower" classes, towards foreigners and women. None the less, such a person will always pay lip service to the ideal.

The weakness of the principle is that it lays stress on order first, and this, though important enough in its place, is by no means the be-all and the end-all of existence. For the same men who are widely tolerant when they understand the feelings they are dealing with, may be absurdly tyrannical when they encounter some

sentiment which is strange to them. It is this failure to understand feelings which causes almost all the blunders committed by the Teuton whether he be Anglo-Saxon or German. It is for want of imagination that the Englishman can be cruel. And yet cruelty is far from being a national characteristic. When an Englishman, for instance, understands an emotion, he is a kindly person. But often, in contact with races unlike his own, he is like a blundering but kindly man trying to tackle a nervous woman who shrinks from him every time he breathes. The Teuton has very little conception of mental suffering. The pain he understands is to him unbearable, and he does his best to sweep it away. But what he doesn't see, he doesn't worry about, and therefore tolerates in hidden places, such as prisons, asylums and laboratories, practices that, could he see them, would never be permitted by him. But when the Englishman is in a stupid mood, he can be amazingly barbarous: he can put Quaker conscientious objectors to nurse helpless, mutilated patients at the Star and Garter, simply because, since the Quakers are not paid, it is cheap to do so. He never stops to realise the bitterness on both sides that is encouraged by such service, where men whose tempers are often soured are kept in a state of irritation by the presence of those whom they regard as cowards and slackers. There is a lack of humour, too, in a procedure which is presum-

ably intended to cure the Quakers themselves of their horror of war by perpetually showing them the ghastly results of it. To any psychological objection of this kind, of course, the English rejoinder would be, "Pooh! they mustn't be thin-skinned."

It is this rough-and-ready Englishman who, when forced to deal with a people of ideals, such as the Irish, or to decide questions of character and temperament, as in the case of conscientious objectors brought before the Tribunals, writes himself down an ass. Common sense, the Anglo-Saxon deity, fails you when you meet people unlike yourself, or see emotions displayed that you have never felt. And the region of sacrifice for any ideal except a severely practical one is outside the scope of English experience. In speaking to a group of women on the Russian revolutionaries I happened to mention that the "grandmother of the revolution" started her career by leaving her husband when he refused to face death or exile for the cause of freedom. These women were entirely in sympathy with the ideals of Russian freedom, as far as they understood them, and many were of the self-sacrificing temperament. Yet I saw a flash of surprise, of half-condemnation, on the faces of several of them. For if "Granny" had been a typical English, instead of a typical Russian woman, she would have passed her life patiently attending to her husband's comforts. She would

never have sacrificed the duty close at hand for the remoter one. And her scrupulous conscience would have contributed to this result even more than her mental cowardice. In England we do not understand forsaking all for "My sake." We have in our annals no St Francis, and therefore whole worlds of experience are closed to us. Our women understand home comfort, and our men civic and national administration. Our gift of organisation makes us do our work roughly like a butcher who, in cutting up a carcase, scarcely pauses to look for the joints. And the joints in our case are character cleavages.

This one-sidedness has served us well enough when mere "licking into shape" had to be done, but in face of the new temper that everywhere challenges authority and demands free scope for individuality, it is likely to be fatal for the world if its destinies are to be left in the hands of the Teutonic race, since this comprises, in the main, the Americans as well as the German and English. And a world well lost for an ideal is the very last expression of the American temperament. In his pursuit of liberty, in his very broad-mindedness, the American always remains conscious of his Puritan backbone. Consider the horror of New York when Maxim Gorki and Madame Andreeva were found to belong to a section of Russian society which regards the marriage ceremony as an insult to love. The American likes to make the best of both worlds, and if



you won't conform to all the fashions, good and bad alike, of this one, he writes you down as ill-bred; which brings us back to common sense, the pivot virtue of Anglo-Saxon morality.

Yet it is on this morality that the future of the League of Nations rests, since the three predominant partners therein must be Great Britain, Germany, and the United States. But if we look at English stupidity in Ireland, at English unimaginativeness in India, or at Germany's tyranny in the Ukraine and Poland, we are naturally not altogether reassured by the greater statesmanship of the United States in Mexico, or the English intelligence in the South African settlement. For Europe will pull heavy-weight in the team of Nations, and all her evil past of terror and aggression hangs over her like a cloud. And this we have brought home to us when we hear men presumably sane talking in one breath of a League of States and in the other of measures that must for ever make that League unworkable. We, it seems, are to build up tariff walls against other members of the League, to keep every portion of our Empire intact; while others fall into disintegration, we are to hold the key straits to many seas, to retain our peculiar reading of the freedom of the seas, and yet to expect all other powers to internationalise their waterways.

Solution is impossible with such a spirit animating any powerful member of the proposed federation. And if the typical "representative men"

of Germany or Great Britain continue to speak for either country, the League can never come into existence.

The question of the future is twofold. First, is there any sign within this country of the emergence of a new type of character? Any sign that the blatant boasters of the divine right of Englishmen to grip and keep are not representative of the coming age, but of the passing one? For if the answer to this is "yes," in England, it is almost certain that in every other Western country the same answer could be given. The second question is, can we perceive along the horizon the coming of a new race whose native characteristics promise greater power of dealing with divergent types than those of the power that has, so far, rough-hewed the world to its present shape? Put in another way both questions come to this: are there fresh forces of will emerging to reinforce the cruder nationalities in the task of world-federation? So far both the ruling classes and the ruling races of to-day understand nothing but how to rule by power; they trust to the balance as this is created by weight of possession. But a world-federation is impossible on such lines, and, unless it is to be one of the worst tyrannies that the planet has ever seen, it must be planned on principles dictated by considerations of character, of national will, and racial genius. And none of these subtle matters has ever been understood by the Teuton. The Englishman, in

this respect, has been, if you will, a well-meaning autocrat, while the German is a tyrannical despot. The point is that they both rely on power for their moving principle.

The most significant sign of the political times in this country is the rise of the Independent Labour Party. It is even more remarkable than the growth of Socialism among the industrial classes, for Socialism, after all, relies, in the first instance, on the natural desire of a man to enjoy material well-being, though of course it does not end there. But the theory of the I.L.P. is the crystallisation of an instinct towards an ideal that may almost be called a spiritual one. Words are but clumsy tools to use in describing the temperament of a group. Yet everyone who has come many times into contact with members of the I.L.P. becomes aware that he is dealing with a truly characteristic type of character. An I.L.P. family, for instance, has got far beyond believing in feminism, because the woman is naturally pulling level with her husband, not only in the home, but in their work outside. The two face sex claims with absolute freedom, and the I.L.P. young man is what women among themselves call "clean." But the outstanding feature of this political party is its prejudice in favour of freedom, and especially of freedom for other people. And that is amazing in England where we like to believe that we ourselves enjoy a freedom which, when they are worthy of it, we

will bestow on others. The I.L.P. man is willing to leave the matter of worthiness alone: he believes in "Judge not," and there, for him, the matter ends. The question of Home Rule or Republic for Ireland is to him, of course, a question for Ireland itself to decide, and when he hears from an English platform a Russian hymn of freedom that of old was only sung in the secret depths of Russian forests, his nerves thrill, for he feels joyfully the wind of freedom blowing from every quarter of the globe. These I.L.P.ers are often eager, thin-lipped, meagre men burning to get the world moving on a new road. They grow mad as the complacent sentences of the old diplomacy fall from the lips of politicians who express only the England of yesterday. And that England the I.L.P.ers would gladly see dead and buried. For one cannot call them, in the usual sense, wide-minded, since they do not endure either hypocrisy or bare-faced greed with any gladness. Everywhere they are humanitarian, being—and this is the root of their nature—so sensitive to suffering that the present state of the world is horrible to them. They are not ascetic for the sake of asceticism, but they are apt to see the slaughter-house behind the sirloin and to enquire too carefully into the source of the anti-toxin. In many ways the I.L.P. type suggests rather the East than the West, or would do so were it not that it drives itself too mercilessly to be really akin to the Hindu. Numbers of them

were, of course, among the conscientious objectors to the war and this partly for political reasons, since they regarded it as capitalistic, but perhaps more often because it was temperamentally impossible for them either to take life or to support others in taking it. It was this conscientious objection to "becoming part of the military machine" that the Englishman of the Tribunals found a hopeless stumbling-block—both for his logic and his imagination. For, although many members of Tribunals got as far as understanding that a man might be squeamish at killing another man, they failed to realise that a man who so objected did not regard his scruples as a weakness but a strength, and therefore refused absolutely to assist anyone else to murder.

Many of the keenest socialists, of course, regard the I.L.P. as a weakness in the Labour Party. To the Marxist the party is simply an expression of sentimentality, and the fact that persons whose interest in politics is of the vaguest are drawn into the Labour movement by way of the I.L.P. is naturally resented by the scientific socialist who believes in mechanical evolution by force as the law of progress. To this type of thinker the Imperialist war of to-day is merely acting as mid-wife to the Social Revolution of to-morrow, when either by shell or shrapnel, or by the throttle grip of starvation on their throats, the possessing classes will be compelled to yield possession of power.

The conflicting schools might be visualised in the picture of two men set over against each other: one is highly strung and quivering with sensitiveness in every feature; the other is strong-built and deliberate with that resolute taciturnity which every one has seen a thousand times in the typical Labour man. Both are, in a sense, emergent types, though the former is, I believe, of the new world, and the latter perhaps is the finest development of the old. They both are in a sense lovers of liberty; but the I.L.P.er will have it that freedom is within and must work from within outward by natural development, while the Marxist holds that the kingdom of liberty can only come by violence—and not at all by prayer and fasting. To both men the claims of nationality are false, and the right of a man to possess what another needs more bitterly than he is a claim that both would banish from the earth. Each, of course, acknowledges the ideal that ultimately the world must be exploited, not for the benefit of some, but for the benefit of all. It is only when individual members of the party to which both belong are seduced by the gaudy claims of “national greatness,” and by the glitter of Imperial Councils, that one does for a moment doubt whether the rock of Labour will stand firm in that wide sea of chaos into which the world will be plunged at demobilisation. But the doubt lasts only for a moment. These men are too transparently honest in bulk to be mistrusted.

But this question of the seduction of leaders brings one up against the inherent weakness of Labour, which is its poor judgment of character. It is this weakness which has, in this country, betrayed the party again and again. It is true that after many years old and tried leaders do finally emerge and are fairly trusted though, even then, neither wisely nor with understanding. For when any one of these leaders does something which the critics of the rank and file cannot understand, he is instantly supposed, only too often, not to have made an error in judgment, but to have been wilfully misleading, or even traitorous. In other words, in the Labour movement men do not seem to trust a man as leader because he is fundamentally honest or wise, but because he happens at some turning-point of importance to have repeated formulas which are pleasing to the majority. Therefore the party not only choose to lead them a great many men of straw, but they also show a deplorable want of stability in supporting an honourable man when he has been chosen. If their choice had, however, been actually based on knowledge of character, they would have been able to face calmly such mistakes in judgment as will at times be made by the wisest and most honest of men. The rank and file are carried away, only too often, by "a gift of the gab," and not only by showy oratory, but even more by conceit and pretension, especially when this pretension takes the form of audacity, intellectual or moral.

The reason for this weakness is that the daily work of these men is to work in material and not to judge character. And where a man could quite competently estimate the quality of steel, or the make-up of a machine, he will be all at sea if he has to judge whether a man is fit for a job requiring grit and acuteness.

The only remedy is to call the women into counsel and to let them decide, or rather have the casting vote on all occasions, as to leaders. Women so far, up to the present time, have been obliged to get their livelihood and that of their children by pleasing men. In the process they have learnt to know a strong man from a weak one, since a woman's whole future has constantly had to depend on whether she had chosen a mate who could defend her from poverty and make a way for her children's future through a jungle of obstacles. More, it is by managing men, and that means by realising what material they are made of, that women have carried out their purposes and accomplished their ambitions. All their lives, too, apart from the question of mating, women work in life and character: it is their job to know their children's natures and to play off the weakness of one against the strength of another in the family. If a mother cannot do this, her house is apt to be a bear-garden. Going deeper still, we find the instinct by which a woman knows a great many things about every man she meets, even casually. To neglect her power of character divination in



the choice of leaders will be the most fatal mistake in organisation that could be made. There might wisely be an auxiliary council of women to discuss and decide on those who shall finally be chosen from the list submitted to it by the men. It is advisable, however, that no man should on that occasion be hidden behind the arras, and this not because he would hear men spoken of too frankly, but for quite a different reason. He would learn on that occasion how tolerant one sex can be of the other, and might later on presume upon the knowledge so gained. But when it comes to the choice of women leaders, that should be handed to a mixed council of men and women, for a man sees one set of values in a woman, and a woman quite a different one. But by comparison of the two a wise choice will be reached.

Yet in a far wider sense than the mere matter of choice of leaders, this woman's gift of feeling character and temperament is of first-rate importance in the rebuilding of the world. It is precisely this gift that is wanted among the organising councils: it is precisely this gift and the other kindred one, of adapting oneself to the claims of many characters in which the man, and especially the Teutonic man, has been lacking all along. To use force to get your way when you can get it by *manœuvre* does not sound a lofty ideal, but it is more effective than the brutal alternative that is called by the male "firm action." How often in the world's history have the women

stood aghast at the ruin wrought by man's love of violence and co-ercion! How often, when irreparable wrong has been wrought by the bulldog style of tackling a difficulty, has she been called in to make the best of a bad matter! Her position, when she chooses to take it, in to-day's affairs will enable her to exercise that gift of stilling strife which, as many peoples discovered long ago in primitive times, made her the best envoy between tribe and tribe. It is quite possible that in all sober truth the organisation of the world will not be on a sound footing until the men are set to their natural task of mastering the material world and framing ideal structures in the mental world, while the women mainly fill the Councils that organise human beings and direct all differences of race and creed, as well as of family and individual divergences in temper and character. For women's genius seems to lie especially in using her powers of organising life: she is child-bringer and teacher: she will in the future satisfy her deepest instincts probably by organising existence with the one aim of producing ever finer and finer types of living creatures. Even now, in our present debased condition, the world is kept from hideous utilitarianism mainly by the work of the women. And if she has worked trivially, it is because she has been kept trivial. That need be so no longer.

But neither the power of Labour nor the influence of woman is strong enough to breathe

new life into Western Society, which always thinks in terms of power, never in values that are purely human. It can only hope to escape from the dead weight of tradition by the trumpet-call of an ideal that is not political, but spiritual. And although the rising of a new type of character in the West is significant as a preparation for the future, it is a new motive power that is wanted, such as can only be given by a strong racial influence that is different from any of those which so far have worked at the building of the social structure. There is only one race to which we can possibly look for such revival.

It was George Moore who pointed out, in the introduction to Dostoevsky's *Poor Folk*, that in Russian fiction it is impossible to trace a plan or to know what was the starting-point which gave rise to the plot. In a Russian novel one finds oneself in mid-stream at once, and in a stream which has apparently been flowing for ever, no one knows whence and no one can guess whither.

In this is reflected the vast monotony of the Russian land, the—to the Western mind—shapeless character of the Russian mind. An Englishman's fields are neat, and so is his mind: the Russian steppes run on to the horizon and his imagination conceives neither boundary posts nor even roads. In politics and business this leaves the nation a prey to the clear-cut decision of

less analytical peoples and accounts for the permeation of Russian official life by the German bureaucrat. At the same time, this quality enables the Russian to move freely in the kingdom of his brother's mind: it makes him tolerant, because he understands. In England, especially in the well-drilled upper- and middle-classes, we turn from the discussion of subjects which are likely to make people lose their tempers. It is, in fact, a mark of good breeding to do so, but the Russian is never happier than when exploring other people's ideas. And no ideas, no instincts, either of the speculative East or active West are, apparently, incomprehensible to his receptive character.

It is this characteristic that makes the Russian, and particularly the untouched Russian of the people, weak in the sentiment of nationality. That is, he has no rooted distrust of people who see things differently from himself. These, too, are his brothers, and perhaps more amusing, on the whole, than his blood brothers. The true Russian, whatever may be the case with other branches of the Slav race, seems to be a human being first and a Russian second. The peasant loves land above all else, because he lives by it, but he has never been tuned to the artificial sentiment of "patriotism," or "my country right or wrong," that in Western Europe it has been the task of the aristocrat to create and of the bourgeoisie to exploit for their own commercial

purposes. The Russian aristocrat, when he is not of German descent, is a French-speaking cosmopolitan to whom Russia is not *patria* but the place from which he draws rent. The sense of nationality is strange, then, in the two prevailing classes of Russian society. In that class, the intelligentsia, which is peculiar to Russia, patriotism is not only foreign, but actually repellent. For this class consists either of workers whom discontent has driven to seek salvation in international socialism as a relief from tyranny, or of aristocrats who have thrown in their lot with the workers because they are idealists, pure and simple. This class is then, not only Socialist before it is Russian, but it needs must be internationally socialistic from the very nature of its position. And neither to the moujik nor the artisan can the phrase "world ideals" long remain strange, as it still is to the rank and file of English Labour men. The position of Socialism in Russia, in that it is free from nationalism, is therefore entirely different from anything known among the socialists of the West. The Russian is by temperament—it is the root fact of his nature indeed—an idealist, and immediately he enters the realm of action it is socialist idealism that grips him. And socialist idealism sees everywhere, not universal material well-being, but universal freedom, as the goal.

It is this fact which gives to the Russian his peculiar love of the great gesture in affairs. His

landowners will, as we learn from Tolstoi, suddenly present estates to the peasants. Trotzky starts the preliminary negotiations with Germany, that ended so disastrously, by wireless messages that were open to the world, and publicly repudiates any Russian claim to the Dardanelles by the same means. It is this generosity that makes Russia to the Allies a stumbling-block, and to the Germans an opportunity for exploitation. It is the same large interpretation, the same eye to the world and not to the affairs of one nation, that puts the Russian socialist on a different plane from the socialists of other nations, to whom their nation is one thing and the world-future quite another. These are the men serving two masters who can neither prevent war nor end it. At the most they form the doubtful element in each government's programme that must be alternately cajoled and dragooned.

This position leaves the Russian, even in politics, in a position of peculiar power in the final solution of the world's enigma. For the Russian aristocrat must needs range himself now among those possessing classes who in all nations are ready to make common cause against the workers. He will be equally ready to ally himself with the German Junker or the English Conservative, and thus forms in himself the touchstone that reveals the instincts of this aristocratic and possessing class throughout Europe. In the same way the Russian worker when he calls, as he needs must, either through

the Bolsheviks or through Kerensky, on the class sentiment of the Western workers is again providing the elements of a new social situation that bids fair to shake the walls of separation between nationalities till these fall and bury the combatant international powers in a common cataclysm of ruin. For what the Russian possessing class says to the possessing class in other countries is "Choose ye which master ye will serve, nation or class." And the proletarian of Russia has the same message for the proletarians of Europe.

The danger to this clear-cut discrimination lies in the plain honest sort of man who is not in love with compromise, but who would prefer to attain his end by compromise than never to attain it at all. And when Russians once get to political action, they are faced, like other people, with the possibility of compromise. For, indeed, political democracy always must imply a certain amount of compromise. And if democracy means order among equals, you cannot attain this unless you put up with many strange doings among your equals. If you cannot suffer, not only fools, but knaves at times, you won't make much of political democracy.

Now the issue between the Bolsheviks and Kerensky is clearly not one of representation by Soviets or Constituent Assembly, that is, by industrial groups or territorial divisions on the English model. This is too academic to disrupt a party, since both systems are representative,

though the former is probably the one that will be eventually adopted when Labour is in the saddle. The issue is one of force or no force, that is, the Bolshevists are Marxists who see in front of them an absolutely essential social Revolution by force. Their idea is already crystallised in England into the saying among the Labour men: "The Israelites had to go through the Red Sea to get to the promised land." This sentence puts the matter exactly, and explains how Bolshevism is, in principle, quite foreign to the British belief in Constitutional reform.

But this Bolshevik faith happens to fall in line with a peculiar fact in Russian psychology which is very perplexing to the tamed and disciplined temper of Western Europe. And that is the Russian power for going mad at intervals, for running amuck until the fever has died down. Many of the peasant risings have been marked by this feature, and many a Russian prison horror is due to the same cause. In the days of "Stolypin's necklace" the deaths of condemned revolutionaries took place under horrible circumstances merely because the bloodlust came upon their guards and executioners.

If one sits down to consider how the economic revolution is ever to be carried out in face of the enormous organised forces opposed to it, one sees that there are but two ways, that is, either by war or by compromise. And compromise is often as dangerous as tight-rope walking across a dark



gulf. It was compromise that drove the English Labour Party into the arms of the Coalition Government and now, that blunder having been made, it is becoming increasingly difficult to withdraw from the position without creating further rifts in all directions. Compromise is always chained to a heavy weight of past errors—and force has a yet heavier weight to drag of past crimes.

Kerensky's position is apparently that, if he wants to fight Germany, he must enter into alliance with the Cadets and the monarchists, with the very party against whom, as a socialist, he is pledged to fight. He hopes, no doubt, to resist Germany by help of reactionary Russia and of the reactionary Allied Governments, and then to turn on his helpers when the real peace with Germany has been signed. But whether this will be possible depends only on whether, in the meanwhile, the Allied Powers are come under the rule of socialist governments. It is on this issue that Kerensky is, one supposes, prepared to gamble.

But when Kerensky is gone and Bolshevism in its present state has passed into the pages of history, the work of Russia will still remain to be done. We have seen two revolutions in that country, we may see many more, until at last we reach the point at which the real Russian comes on the stage. And he is not a politician, but a religious idealist. It is on that idealist that the future of the world depends. Mentally, where the man of the West is a lover of order and

makes compromises to obtain it, the Russian is a man of logic prepared to carry his belief to its logical conclusion. And no such man as this has, so far, ever had a chance of using his peculiar gift for the unfolding of the world's hidden powers. The Russian is no builder, he is the unfolders of that which is within.

In the first place, he is the link between East and West, and since evolution has so far proceeded by separation, the return journey has now to be made—is evidently going to be made—on the lines of union. On the Western side the Russian is a man of action: on the Eastern, he is speculative, and many Russian customs, such as that of older men going into “retreat” before death, as Count Tolstoi did, are purely Eastern. There is, of course, the danger in this middle position that the Russian may be caught in the swirl of European politics on the one hand, or may dream away existence after the Eastern fashion. From both of these dangers Russian intensity and Russian idealism is probably sufficient to save him.

The greatest question before the world now is not whether Germany will come into the League. For that Germany will be obliged to do so, if ever the League comes into being, is clear. It is: will Russia prove to be the guiding inspiration of that League, or will she stay outside? There are now two paths before Europe, and the choice between them will settle whether the course of

the world's evolution is to be slow or very swift. And the choice between the paths depends on Russia's action. If she comes into the League with all her religious idealism, she will make it more just in action and liberal in spirit. She will, in other words, prevent its becoming the tyranny it promises to be under purely Western guidance. For this projected alliance of states is merely the final outcome of the reliance of the Western peoples on political organisation. It is only a greater State than mere Empire. Tempered by the idealism of a deeply spiritual race it may actually be administered with generosity towards all its members. For the example of the presence at the Council Chamber of a great nation that actually desires for itself no fresh territory, no restraining hold on any other sub-race, will be the most purifying and ennobling possible. It will bring a new atmosphere into the stifling miasma of European diplomacy. By their repudiation of their claim to the Dardanelles the Russians have already brought the principle of No Annexations out from the region of rhetoric into the region of fact. And that is a greater achievement than any mere planning of the federation of the world, for it is not a mere bit of intellectual work but a new expression of the spirit in man.

Yet even so the League of Nations will still depend on organisation: it will be, in fact, nothing more than the apotheosis of the State. And as such it can never fully satisfy the claims

of either races or individuals to absolutely self-determined freedom. In other words, it may be a step towards the consummation, it cannot be the final goal. It is conceivable, then, that Russia, even if nominally within the League, will proceed on her own course, which is towards the absolute freedom that can only be obtained by obeying nothing whatever but the dictates of the inner light that "lighteth every man." In other words, the genius of the West being purely political, and the genius of the East purely religious, the latter may turn aside from any real dependence on the political structure of Europe and may choose a purely religious expression of its power. And that will probably be a shorter way than by first trying to express itself by any State structure whatever. Undoubtedly many will respond to Russia's call in the Western world, and thus the individualism of spiritual liberty will begin to move even the West, in place of the individualism of material, of capital, and the more furious conflicts of states.

Christianity in the West ceased to be a religious power when it allied itself to the State. There are still some simple people in this country who expect the Church once more to become Christian. These were horrified when, at the opening of the war, it became a question of the State's commands or of Christ's, and the Church was everywhere found to be on the side of the State. But even now they do not realise that the

Western peoples have become purely political, and, as a whole, respect nothing but order and respectability, because these make for comfort. The State has, in fact, everywhere swallowed the Church.

But it still remains true that the soul of man, even of the politically minded man, is restless till it rests in the boundless freedom of the divine. And ultimately the weight of all State organisation, even of a well-managed one, will be found unbearable, and then the Russian ideal of Brotherhood without a State will be acclaimed by those who have silently carried this ideal in their hearts. Self-determination means ultimately no State structure at all, but liberty for every man to follow the bent of his will as decided by nothing but the authority of the God within himself.

The inheritors of this world of spiritual freedom are appearing in all directions, and whether by the long way of a temporary world organisation by a League of States, or by the reign of Socialism without a State, they must ultimately enter into their kingdom. For these are they who understand the strange Russian saying that "Real powerlessness is real God power," or as it is put elsewhere, "The meek shall inherit the earth." For how can a man whose life is rooted deep in universal brotherhood ever be angry at anything done by that which is essentially himself? For brotherhood in the spiritual sense is unity.

To establish this kingdom the old world must be destroyed. And that is being done by the war: the civilisation built on self-assertion and on possession is blowing itself to bits. It is getting ready for the coming of the inheritors, among whom the Russians will be the leaders. For as a Russian writer has said, in speaking of Western Europe: "The measure of your genius is limited, ours limitless." It is limitless because it sees no law anywhere but the right by which all men are free to express themselves in limitless freedom and limitless love. In face of such a spirit Leagues and States are but toys. The best that can be said of them is that, by their use, children are often made better mannered.

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## Chapter XJ.—The New Fear

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**I**F the story of our race is ever told in terms of its fears the first thing to be described will be the various powers that were turned into gods because men were afraid of them and hoped to bribe them to kindness by paying sacrifice and worship. This is the stage of childhood, but there are still millions of people who have not got beyond it. Accordingly such persons believe that, when victory does not come to their arms, it is because God is angry that people do not go to Church. He has, in fact, missed the tribute of sacrifice by which He ought to have been pacified. The things feared at this point are powers outside humanity, the forces of nature and the elements, or of natural processes that act by cause and effect. For intelligent people science has narrowed the area of such fears almost to vanishing point by the growing knowledge of how they are to be controlled.

The next field in which fears arise is that of the human mind itself, the fear of sin, of that aberration of the powers within that seem to rise in civil war against the government of the will. Its essence is the feeling of division and

an internal devil god is created to account for it. Again science, this time of the mind, comes to our aid and begins to show laws that also govern this manifestation. Knowledge here is, at present, less complete than in the region of natural phenomena, and therefore fears are more prevalent than in the first zone of terror. But still we are advancing towards a time when on this head also fear will have vanished.

But at this point quite a new world of fear arises, and that is of the very power which all along the road has been conquering fear and putting it under man's feet. This is fear of man's own work, of his achievements, of knowledge and the things he has made by it. In reading some romance of what the world will be like when everything is organised, we have all experienced a sense of imprisonment, of being shut in behind high walls as in some nightmare. That is the fear which seems to have risen to a culminating point at the present moment, though at a period of chaos, and not at a moment of cast-iron order, as in the romances. The feeling now prevalent is that mankind has created a machine which he cannot stop, do what he will. He is no longer in command; it has not run away from him, but it is going on perpetually revolving like an ever-turning wheel with himself as a fly on it. As a soldier put it the other day, "They've turned the war into a business." And that is the feeling everywhere. It is, this war



and all the organisation of production behind it, a business like the Voysey inheritance. You have now to keep on keeping on at it lest a worse thing befall, and that is—a searching enquiry into the foundations of everything. Man is now only nominally in command of the business he has created. It has grown beyond him, as people say of a child. But this child is the process of production for destruction, which creates both commodities and life and then flings both into the refuse destroyer called war. Yet instead of refuse, it is using up its finest material. And many people look calmly forward to an indefinite future of the same process. They can conceive no idea of how the end of it will come, or whether, indeed, any end to it is ever possible. Politicians keep their hands on the levers of the machine, though they have long been powerless to do more than keep it working in a straight line, and priests continue in every Church to stoke up the fires of the human will to get on with the job. The artists preserve a certain detachment, but they, too, are fascinated by the sight of this gigantic whirligig, and the everlasting order is, "Move along, please." The Press shouts it and the pulpit continues to organise a general agreement that this is the only way for man to walk in. Thought is now, of course, managed by machinery, just as much as cloth-weaving or shell-filling.

Yet there is fear underneath, fear of this

unanimity of organisation; for men are beginning to realise that they are bound, not only in the strait jacket of past tradition, but in the chains of present custom and—unless they get free—of hopeless slavery in the future. The war and its apparent endlessness is the culminating point of a desperation that has been steadily growing during the last half-century. This began first as a rebound in the face of achievement in art, but now it works underground by a thousand channels of incipient rebellion.

For the truth is that we are overweighted, overawed, reduced to timidity of initiative as long as we turn our eyes backwards towards the supreme expressions of early art. In painting, poetry and sculpture there always loom before our memories the awful haunting shadows of Raphael, Michael Angelo, Homer, Æschylus and Phidias; of Italian and Spanish schools; of Dutch, Miltonic and Shakespearian incarnations of beauty. We petty men walk under the huge legs of these things done superlatively well and done for all time, as we count time on this planet. Who for instance ever tried to paint the mystery of woman without seeing the mocking smile of the Mona Lisa before his inner eye? The trumpet notes of the hymn to beauty have rung once and for all; we can only echo it in ever fainter and fainter tones. And that is but a sorrowful task.

There is nothing for it but to start again; to

make for the leaping-off place once more, this time with an entirely different objective before us. And the leaping-off place is the child's, the savage's, absorption in life, movement, colour-play, in sensation devoid of memory, either bitter or sweet. We return to the primitive reindeer scratchings; we will create a new world, not paint once more for the millionth time an illusory picture of an old, a very well-known one. As music hangs by the side of the actual an orb of creative sound, so the Post-Impressionists would hang by it a visual orb of colour, a vibrating microcosm of the universe; an orb of human making hanging by the divine orb. Whereby, indeed, by comparison we may, as a cynic would observe, learn the immensely superior workmanship of the divine artificer!

All this means a new objective: back once more at the starting-point, moving by instinct, not intellect, the painter becomes aware that the zest of life, which is art's pre-occupation, is by no means always concerned with beauty. The life, the vitality of our emotions is often a matter of terror, pain, squalor, agony and effort. The old academic ideal of reducing every sensation to one of beauty is gone for ever. The vibration of life itself is the new ideal where once only the vibration of beauty was sought. So turning at bay in face of the new fear, we have learnt a fresh courage. We find that, after all, we have much to say, much that burns to be said, though

in these things that we wish to say, only to the eye of the mystic, such as old Rodin, would it seem true that "there is no ugliness." We work only by the senses now, seeking, savage-like, the rage and vitality of the vibrations that make no world of beauty as the Academy of Art would see it, but a world none the less. We go back to the leaping-off place, the new start, and there Homeric epic drives us from the gods to *The Man with the Hoe*; from *Lear* we fly to *Hindle Wakes*; from the majesty of movement in the *Winged Victory* to the strained muscles of Rodin's *Last Appeal*; from the sun-shot landscape of Turner to the leaden seas of Bogaevsky; from the Madonna to the fragment that passion tosses aside on the scrap-heap, Rodin's *Old Hag*. We are passing from the high adventure of loveliness to the no less lofty adventure of pain. We are dealing with the other side of the shield.

And wound round these primordial things are dreams, the primitive dreams of a child's vision of creation. Here the Russian surpasses all his European compeers, as the Chinese landscape painter surpasses the European in the suggestion of bizarre creation, a mockery of the divine as seen by the pygmy. The Russian is nearer to the savage, perhaps, than is the Englishman or the Frenchman, nearer to the true start. The Russian is, in fact, the primitive dreamer, and where the other European schools get back to the bones of savage sensation the Russian has no need to fuss

about bones, for the very blood of the thing is in him. He is, in these childlike matters, no anatomist, but a living, breathing man.

As far as art is concerned, out of fear has come the possibility, at any rate, of new mastery; for illusion we have creation; for beauty, the infinite vibrations of many-coloured life. And if these things are not yet, they are at least potentially involved in the new impetus which is everywhere seeking a vent.

In politics and science the way is not so clear. Yet in those regions fear rules even more unmistakably. For men change the fashion of their fears as they change the cut of their garments. Once it was the animals, the wind and the sea that we feared. Now we harness the winds and outwit the trickery of the sea with a steam kettle. Nor is any affinity dearer to us than that of the animals whose love we have conquered in the long ages during which we were breaking the horse to the plough, teaching the dog to know the look in a human eye, or inducing the cat to bow her head in the kindly worship of the hearth. Of these things we have no fear; nor of the simpler creatures yet untamed that yield to a Martini-Henry rifle.

It is not the anti-human things outside us that we dread nowadays, neither beast, nor storm wind, nor electric current; it is the Frankenstein of our own manufacture, a being before whose infinite unknown possibilities we stand aghast. From the

art of beauty which does so obsess us, we can escape to a new creative world ; but where is the power that will save us from the machine that enslaves where it was meant to free? How shall we escape the awful possibilities of our evolving scientific powers, from aerial warfare, from the tyranny of the anti-toxin, from the hypnotic gift that reads even the mind of the atom, from telepathic and clairvoyant powers from which no secrets are hid, and finally from the potentialities of creation which would follow on any discovery of the secret of life? As it is, we are already afraid of the race that we may make. And the great expression of that fear is the presence in our midst of those croaking prophets of evil, the Eugenists, who cry not "Corpse, corpse," like the raven, but a far more awful note, which is "Babe, babe."

But even these premonitions pale before the portents of the social engine we have created only half consciously. No politician is likely now to underestimate the importance of international labour. The strangest feature of that is the rapidity of its movement. A mushroom growth no older than the beginning of the nineteenth century, it possesses for man the terror he always associates, since primitive jungle days, with that which is sinuous and swift-moving, a creature snaky yet panther-like. Trade-Unionism, Socialism, Syndicalism: will they remake civilisation, either by anarchy or by the slow incalculable processes

of growth? With dread we wait the answer. But if labour deal with the frontiers of nations, will not the monstrous regimen of awakening woman re-organise the very fabric of the social structure itself? For ultimately the economic independence of woman, now no more than a cloud like a man's hand in the sky of Feminism, will overshadow all other questions. And the real economic independence of woman will mean not only a new basis of industrialism, but a fresh setting on the loom of life of that out of which the race is built—the relationship between man, woman and child.

And even in international politics the League of States has its terrible possibilities as a world-wide engine of autocracy, a second Holy League, ready made for the hand of the first power that shall be sufficiently unified to control it for aims other than those of universal self-determination. Truly, if we look not only at what is, but at the latent possibilities of what may be, we are not fear-driven, but hag-ridden.

But never yet has the human spirit really allowed itself to be conquered. Its whole story is one of conquest over one fear after another. And every conquest has given it fresh force for the next onslaught, since each time it has cast off one more of the trappings that shroud religion in superstition. At one time the power of the soul was shackled by questions belonging to geology, as to whether it took seven days or a million years

to make the rocks. But with the growth of science that shroud went overboard. Long before that, with the decay of pagan joy in natural life, the human spirit had lost itself, apparently for ever, in caverns of distrust where brooded sins like evil spirits to torment and haunt. This existence of craven terror was only ended by some appreciation of the fact that the so-called vices are nothing more than the driving force of character. It was—and is—mental science that thus frees the man who is willing to be free, not only from the despotism of dogma, but from that claim of spiritual authority under which for so many centuries unhappy mortals lived lives of fear.

In our days we are approaching another deliverance of the soul, and in one way this is the strangest of all. For the whole area of miracle and the nature of the process called death, as well as the character of after-death conditions, is passing again into the hands of science. For all this area of speculation or of dogmatic teaching which has so long continued as a prerogative of the Church is seen now to be, as it always has actually been, simply one of enquiry and experiment by scientific methods. And the widespread interest of the people in spiritualism has its important side since these experiences will naturally supply the vast body of phenomena which awaits the work of scientific research.

At this point, with natural phenomena a department of physics, astronomy and geology; with



sin a matter of pathology and with miracle and the survival of identity beyond death relegated to psychical science, the soul is at last free and religion one-pointed, as it were, for its true work. It is not only ready to set out on the journey towards unity with all that lives, and to learn from that brotherhood the meaning of divine fatherhood, it is also preparing to live in an atmosphere where fear is dried up as a mist fades before the sunlight.

For the very poorest appreciation of the union which exists between all life implies a sense of freedom. And the thing which humanity has made in the days of its bondage and ignorance it will break the moment it comes actually to realise spiritual liberty. Tradition in art, in self-expression, is already tossed aside for those who are ready to be free of it. Labour is gradually learning, not only its own power, but its own unity, its one world-wide brotherhood of spirit, and it is Labour that will break the economic toils which fetter it, as ultimately it is the whole human race itself that will have no more of political trammels when once these have served their purpose. Tribal law has gone, nationality is weakening: nor will internationalism rule for ever. There is a freedom beyond all political freedom, which is at best only organisation. But humanity's life is meant for growth and not for anything so mechanical as organisation.

In fact, a double process has been going on

throughout evolution : on the one hand the powers of machinery and organisation have grown ever more complex and more masterful. That is the story of politics and economics. On the other religion has been slowly stripped of everything not essential to its real life. It was Christ who, for the West, expressed the divine unity of all life. But in the interval of nearly two thousand years that elapsed before the appearance of Tolstoi, Christ's message was being submerged under all sorts of superstitions to which men were required to assent as articles of faith, though almost all these were matters that could be put to the test as facts. Tolstoi it was who stripped off the last accumulation and left nothing of religion but its spirit of love and kinship with all that lives that is called brotherhood, and with the source of life in the universe that is known as divine fatherhood. He brought thus the first clear expression of Russia's gift to the world, which is that of spiritual liberty.

One Sunday there came to see me two Russian Jew boys who were sent to me from the barracks by other conscientious objectors then imprisoned in the Guard House. They began by saying, "We have denied the crucified one." At first I could not understand, but later it became clear to me. They had passed on their way to me a wood-carver's shop—and in his window there stood a crucifix with a figure hanging on it. These two lads, unlike the Englishmen with them, had

yielded to pressure and signed on for the army. "We," so they said, "couldn't face the idea of an English prison, yet our grandfather endured a Russian one because he wouldn't be conscript." So, in their phrase, they had denied the crucified one. And, although they were of the Jewish Church, that was the way they put the matter. No Englishman to whom I have told this story seems able to understand how boys of such a creed could use this phrase to describe their plight, for no Anglo-Indian whose wife had been devoured by a tiger would ever refer to the legendary fate of the Bouddha to describe what had occurred. But to these boys the imagery of the Cross is the one they instantly select as right. In their idealism they overleap the atmosphere of orthodoxy and turn at once to the emblem of spiritual freedom and to the final expression of brotherhood as the only appropriate one. These lads were, it is true, mastered by fear, but even so, they retained a vague idea of the liberty that is above fear.

But though this spirit is pre-eminently the expression of the Russian genius, it is not unanswered in other countries. This spirit it is that in England creates the "free discipline" of some schools, and the absolute self-government of others. It gives freedom to outcast children in the Little Commonwealth and finds in them the power of love and order. It brings into Sing-Sing prison Governor Osborne and grants Self-

determination successfully to those who have been the terror of society. The French when they use the phrase *la bonté impérieuse* hit, as the French have a trick of doing in language, at the very heart of this liberty, while from Italy Dr Montessori sends out an example of trust in natural development that is a challenge to yet wider confidence in the inner guidance of childhood.

Not only does this spirit free children and prisoners; it has already accomplished a greater liberation. For the Russian neither troubles about personality enough to care whether identity continues even to the final union of the one with the many, nor plagues himself with the imagination of possible torments. For in this ray of sunlight every germ of fear is burnt out of existence.

Except the fear of death: that is still an obsession to all imaginative and analytical people sufficiently active in mind to be not entirely immersed in speculation. For, since the realisation of unity comes by glimpses only, the void between is terrible. Only the full and lasting realisation of oneness can cure it.

And this is the new hope.

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## Chapter XXX.—The New Hope

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**O**UR own age, unlike most other great periods of the world's history, spends much time in looking backward over the road already traversed from the first beginning of life on this planet up to the present moment, when every conception of the mind is being cast into the melting-pot. Nor is this habit unreasonable, since the milestones now passed may give us guess, not indeed of the length of the journey before us, still less of its incidents, but at any rate of the direction in which it will probably tend. And this looking backward, this prefiguring of a shadowy future, has inevitably changed the view taken of the immediate present. For, if we work down to the bed-rock of modern thought, we shall find in it a new orientation of the mind. To older ages, as still to simple folk, the most ancient heavens were held in place and the destiny of every creature fixed by the fiat of a self-directed Person, or earlier still, by many Beings answerable to no court higher than their own volition. For a time, too, so great was the shock of man's first Pisgah sight of the possibilities of physical science, this power of governing destiny was applied to humanity itself and it was supposed

that, since man had discovered how to fly round the world on a steam-kettle, he could certainly become the builder of the New Jerusalem here on earth, if not the founder of a city in the heavens not made with hands. But always, whether in the shape of God, or gods, or men, we find that reliance in the past has been placed on self-directed will.

This idea of a self-willed, probably freakish, governance of the world has vanished from the minds most typical of the temper of the present century. When by a force unseen a planchette moved before a disciple of the old school, he cried "a miracle performed for my special benefit," much as though the divine power had descended to play the part of conqueror in a penny peep-show. But when a man of to-day sees the same phenomenon he says, "a law that I do not yet know has moved it." And by the few laws, some part of whose working we understand, by the many more we are beginning to detect, may we judge of the enormous field of forces which entirely escape both our senses and our reason.

Nor is it hard to find the hope which bids us cheerfully take the road, since our trust is in nothing less than in the complexity of the universe. We perceive now, in the little lighted spot which alone is visible to us, such a dovetailing of parts, such an interplay of forces, such analogies of likeness, that we are forced to

recognise all that is, including ourselves, as part of a warp and woof apparently as endless in time as it is also apparently boundless in space. *Omnia exeunt in mysterium*; in that is our hope. From the great deep to the great deep we go, and the deep behind us being fathomless, we have good reason for supposing that no plummet can measure the deep in front of us. In short, nowadays we read our immortality backwards. For as the ultra-red rays of the spectrum have their analogy in what has been called the ultra-red rays of the human organism, those powers now below the threshold of consciousness that direct the functions of the body, so the ultra-violet rays are paralleled by the telepathic powers that reveal a net-work of consciousness existing between mind and mind. These are only first glimpses, of course, of the complexity of the human creature, but in them we have grasped the heel of Achilles, enough at any rate to hint to us something of the full structure. We are no may-flies of a day, but beings the several planes of whose nature link them with the several planes of a universe so varied that no man's dreaming has come anywhere near the reality of what man's groping is already bringing to light. This theory, of man the microcosm, seen of old by the mystic is, in our day, becoming the mental attitude of the plain man. In this it is, then, that our age differs from preceding ones; nowadays it is not only the great man who sees

visions, or the genius who dreams dreams, but the humble man lives with a vision and the simple man knows himself to be the key to a treasure-house that kings have desired to possess . . . and could not.

Dimly we can foresee some of the immediate steps to be taken by our race. It has been written often enough that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth together, but unless the utterer of the saying has some notion of the kind of child that these birth-pangs foretell, he had better hold his peace. Yet some faint notion of the purpose of this travail has been long forming in the minds of men. For whatever may have been the story of the separation of each now isolated self from the universal life, whether it was, as mystics say, a vast outbreathing of the divine energy, or, as scientists prefer to phrase it, a result of the coursing of life through matter, there is no doubt now that the deep inmost desire of all life is towards oneness, towards the wholesale casting down of barriers between the human self and its environment, and between self and self. In this process it is art that will play the leading part. Each religion has its communion of saints, which is, after all, nothing more than a linking of like with like; whereas the problem of all the world's striving is the union of like with unlike, or organic with inorganic, as of saint with sinner. Now the artist's fundamental instinct, that which



indeed makes him artist, is to break down the barrier between himself and something alien to himself, yet akin with an akinness known only to him . . . until he tells it forth to all. As ages of the past have built up in him, as in all of us, his sense of personal identity, so ages of the future will be required to merge his sense of identity in the universal life. And that way of identification with the universe is the way we all have to tread. We begin it by learning the oneness of man with man.

The old individualism, which lived by getting and keeping, brought us to the new fear of what we have made, of the monster we have conceived. But there are already signs that the grip of this individualism is loosening its hold, while most assuredly the forms it has built up are being split and rent from top to bottom. Creeds and dogmas, as things that separate, are losing their ancient power, and nationality, the great divider, is weakening in every direction in the masses of the people among whom it has only survived at all by artificial stimulation.

The new individualism, or rather the new realisation of its power, for it is as old as life itself, is emerging everywhere from the rubbish under which it has been buried for so long. One may use grand phrases to describe it or refer to some ecstatic vision of the oneness of life. But, after all, the one proof of its power comes by individual experience. And it is almost impossible of de-

scription in words. As Schumann said, "No human being can tell another how he loves him."

My own solitary vision of the truth came to me in connection with a tobacconist's little shop. It was the most commonplace incident you could possibly meet, yet full of a glow and passion that belonged assuredly to a new world of values. It began with an old man, a Lloyd George pensioner, half-paralysed with cold in the bitter east wind. I got him into the nearest shop and the tobacconist, who had been economising with his gas, lighted the stove to warm the old fellow. Going across the street to fetch a cup of tea, I met a woman who thought of a ham sandwich, and presently we had our friend chirping in front of the fire. When it came to getting him home, he chose to go in a cab for the spree of it, rather than to save up the two shillings it would have cost for another day, when the wind might be cold and the cupboard bare, as it was when I found him.

Throughout the incident I was aware of a sense within unlike anything I had ever known. It explained by direct perception the origin of those legends of the ferryman who, after conveying a strange traveller across the water, finds that his passenger has been none other than a divine being. There was a glow of life, a quality of joy, in the experience that transformed common things as wine is changed when it becomes the wine of life. I don't know whether the poor tobacconist or the woman shared with me my high moment. One

never knows these things. But it is a knowledge of such spiritual values as this that shines through the sordid scenes of Russian stories—now and again. It glows, a steady fire, in Dostoevsky's *Poor Folk*, it is given exact expression in his character Alosa, but it reaches unearthly power in a little scene among submerged cellar-dwellers who, gathering round a deserted child, find him become the Son of Man.

This is not that poor old piece of artificiality the love of humanity, whose finest outcome is the Man of Sentiment. Another Russian novelist, Kuprin, who describes the utter degradation of barrack life in peace time, puts the truth: "Love of humanity is burnt out and has vanished from the heart of man. In its stead shall come a new creed, a new view of life that shall last to the world's end; and this view of life consists in the individual's love for himself, for his own powerful intelligence, and the infinite riches of his feelings and perceptions. . . . Then there shall be no longer slaves and masters; no maimed and crippled, no malice, no vices, no pity, no hate. Men shall be gods. How shall I dare to deceive, insult, or ill-treat another man, in whom I see and feel my fellow, who, like myself, is a god? Then, and then only, shall life be rich and beautiful. . . . Love, free and sovereign, shall become the world's religion."

The highest bliss ever reached by the human soul has been prefigured throughout the ages by

the image of the lover in his desire for union with the beloved. And this union of life with life is, as Plato said long ago by the mouth of a woman, one of those paths to the desire of all nations which is the goal of our hope, the identification of each self with the universe which comprises in its mighty round the coursing of the stars, the life of bird and beast and reptile, the unseen elements of the air and the soul of man. Almost all of us can dream of some ineffable splendour signified by the words, the joy of lovers, but this final unity of which art is the handmaid simply means that one day the approach of human to human and of man to the Nature spirit will be as when a lover meets his mistress.

For this union of the Self with the Not-Self it is not alone the artist who works, though his toil has in it the greatest promise of success: Some John of the Cross, a mystic drunk with God, finds the barriers down between himself and the invisible world. But alas! it is only he who knows the way to that vision. More sublime, though more selfish than the artist, no mystic can share his ecstasy with me. For drunk with wine or drunk with God, the drunkenness must be mine alone. I can divide neither sacrament nor bottle. Only the artist can break the barriers wholesale; for all the rapture of all the lovers whose passion has for a moment sublimated the mystery of two lives made one could never break the barriers between us all and the soul of woman as

Verrocchio breaks them with his pale lady of Florence and Leonardo in La Gioconda. Neither lover nor mystic can give the glorious freedom of the broken barrier to other lives. It is only the artist who, when he opens the windows, opens them for all who look.

There are many substitutes for this deep desire of life to possess the universe or be possessed by it. For just as bodily absorption takes the place of that unity of two natures which is the mystery of love, so the satisfaction of material possession attracts many. If I cannot be possessed of the universe, I will possess it—at least as much of it as my two hands can grasp. As desire is the other side of love, so the greed of the would-be millionaire is the other side of the artist's passionate mastery of the unseen soul of things. One with the Not-Self in some fashion all would be. That is the long insistent reverberating note which accounts, on the one hand, for the insurgence of the *crime passionel* and the race for wealth, on the other for futurism in art and internationalisation in politics.

Nothing on earth can bring the barriers down more universally than this presentment of the emotions which the artist accomplishes when some part of the world outside touches him to the "quick." This "quickness" is the root of the matter, for it gives the power to reveal the living heart of his own life and then to spring lightning-like to the heart of the thing that touched him

and so to show both atune. Such is art's supreme task. On every step of the heights before us it is the artist who must go before the mass, he, the revealer. None whom Michael Angelo or Rodin has touched can look again on the stone in the same old unbrotherly fashion as he did before these men showed life emerging from it. Still less can he look on man in the same uncomprehending fashion, for these stone-workers have also shown us something new of him. And that is the fellowship which dwells between him and the rock out of which he is made. Not for nothing did the Egyptians symbolise the god of the creative spirit by the circle above the cross, meaning by that the conquest of matter by spirit.

But the contrast between the stonework of Rodin and of Michael Angelo is at once a prophecy and an explanation, since the question of abstract Beauty separates the two, and on that rock of Beauty many fair ships of criticism have gone astray. Needless enough, as now appears in the light of the torch which Science has put into our hands. For Art that is born of hunger has been one long story of the conquest of death for the purposes of life and its future will be, like its past, the conquest of more and more of the heart secret of the world, of that ecstasy which lives at the base of all existence.

Ecstasy: first historically speaking, the ecstasy of loveliness, and then of other things, of pain

and death, of misery and monotony, even of the commonplace. A very little knowledge of our own souls would have served to show that, if the unseen forces are like us, they find their supreme moments at strange times, in fires of martyrdom no less than on beds of roses. The artist builds his bridges, too, from every kind of human experience, working as he does, for the time foreseen by the mystic when the animal shall not be alien to man, and when the light as it falls from the sky shall be known as part of the light within ourselves.

It is this promise that supplies our hope.

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